BOSTON PUBLIC LIBRARY
COMMONWEALTH

U 046
Good
Irish
107781

WITHDRAWN FOR REFERENCE

Metropolitan Borough of Islington
PUBLIC LIBRARIES
NORTH LIBRARY
MANOR GARDENS, HOLLOWAY ROAD, N.

HOURS.

ADULT LENDING LIBRARY.

OPEN from **10** a.m. till **9** p.m. (except on Wednesdays, when it closes at **1** p.m.)
CLOSED on Sundays and public holidays.

JUVENILE LENDING LIBRARY.

OPEN. Monday to Friday, 4 p.m. to 8 p.m. Saturday, 10 a.m. to 5.30 p.m. **CLOSED** on Wednesdays, Sundays and public holidays.

RENEWALS. The issue of a book may be renewed for a further period of **15** days. When a book is not **returned** for renewal, this notice must be given in writing.

RESERVED BOOKS. Any book may be reserved on payment of one penny to cover expenses *See* Rule 20.

TIME ALLOWED FOR READING.

This book is issued for **15** days and must be returned on or before the date last stamped on the date label. If kept beyond that date borrowers are liable to a fine of 1d. per week or portion of a week and cost of notices

LONDON BOROUGH OF LEWISHAM
LIBRARY SERVICE

Author

Title

BOOK STORE

Books or discs must be returned on or before the last date stamped on label or on card in book pocket. Books or discs can be renewed by telephone, letter or personal call unless required by another reader. After library hours use the Ansafone Service (01-698 7347). For hours of opening and charges see notices at the above branch, but note that all lending departments close at 1 pm on Wednesday and all libraries are closed on Sundays, Good Friday, Christmas Day, Bank Holidays and Saturdays prior to Bank Holidays.

METROPOLITAN
SPECIAL COLLECTION

IRISH UNIONISM

N.I. 08

MODERN IRELAND IN THE MAKING

IRISH UNIONISM

BY

JAMES WINDER GOOD

AUTHOR OF
"ULSTER AND IRELAND"

DUBLIN
THE TALBOT PRESS
(LIMITED)
85 TALBOT STREET

LONDON
T. FISHER UNWIN
(LIMITED)
1 ADELPHI TERRACE

1920

U046
WITHDRAWN
N
104481

Printed at
THE TALBOT PRESS
85 Talbot Street
Dublin

MSC
U046
Cat
NATIONAL LIBRARY OF IRELAND

TO

ALICE STOPFORD GREEN

Digitized by the Internet Archive
in 2026

https://archive.org/details/irishunionism0000jame

Islington
Public
Libraries.

CONTENTS

Chapter		Page
I.	THE MESS OF POTTAGE	1
II.	THE GARRISON	29
III.	THE CASTLE	56
IV.	O'CONNELL AND THE OLIGARCHS	77
V.	THE NEW REFORMATION	102
VI.	VOICES IN THE WILDERNESS	123
VII.	OLIVE BRANCH OR BATTLE-AXE?	147
VIII.	LAND AND LIBERTY	170
IX.	ASCENDANCY IN THE DITCH	193
X.	THE SHATTERED IDOL	217

THIS BOOK MUST NOT BE TORN, WRITTEN UPON, OR MARKED IN ANY WAY, AND READERS WILL BE HELD RESPONSIBLE FOR ANY DAMAGE DONE BY THEM.

IRISH UNIONISM

Chapter I.

THE MESS OF POTTAGE.

Anglo-Irish history for seven centuries is a record of the efforts of British statesmen to assert, extend, and consolidate their authority in Ireland. From the sword of Cromwell to the bribes of Castlereagh innumerable experiments have been tried; but since the beginning of the nineteenth century the instrument employed to enforce the will of the ruling Power has been the machinery set up by Pitt under the title of the Legislative Union. To one school of Irish political thought this measure represents the highest achievement of British statesmanship, and constitutes the keystone of the wide arch of empire. To another, the keystone figures rather as a fetter which binds Ireland helplessly to the chariot-wheels of her conquerors, destroys her individuality, and enables her rulers to tighten with one hand the grip on her throat while with the other they rifle her pockets.

In the opinion of both these schools the effect on the structure and development of the Union of the special circumstances and prevailing influences

of the era in which it came into existence is at the best a matter of secondary importance. This conclusion is justified if one accepts as final the contention of its supporters that the Union was the crown of a good work too long delayed, or of its opponents that Pitt did no more than give a new form of expression to the spirit which has animated England in all her dealings with her neighbour. Undoubtedly, the Union was fashioned by its authors in accordance with what they held to be the special needs of the Irish situation, and was designed by them to cope with a difficulty which, they argued, and in all probability sincerely believed, was the peculiar perplexity of statesmen who ruled the British dominions.

There are, however, wider implications in the problem demanding, in my opinion, closer analysis than they have received from the majority of writers who have discussed the question. It is not sufficient to regard the Act of Union as a landmark in the relations between England and Ireland. It represented also the response to an impulse which affected politics all over Europe. Everywhere the ruling minority was throwing up defences against the new evangel of liberty and equality which France had proclaimed to the world through the lips of her politicians and philosophers, and was carrying to triumph on the bayonets of her armies. Privilege in Ireland was even more concerned than privilege elsewhere to safeguard its position by any means, fair or foul. In other countries the advance of

democracy might threaten the supremacy of the ruling class; in Ireland, or so it seemed to the apostles of Ascendancy, it cut at the roots of their existence. This is a factor to which due weight has not been given by those who see in the Union merely a sordid transaction in which Parliamentary votes were bartered for stars, and ribbons and hard cash.

To take this view is not to defend the peers and commoners who held out itching palms for Pitt's gold. Gladstone's phrase, "unredeemed blackguardism," expresses the sober judgment of history on their action; and the fiery scorn of the verses which every Irish child knows by heart embodies the literal truth:—

"How did they pass the Union? By perjury and fraud,
By men who sold their land for gold, as Judas sold his God."

Even the present holders of Union peerages are not flattered by a reference to the votes that founded the fortunes of their houses; and still more strangely, men, who profess to be ready to fight dagger-out-of-sheath for the maintenance of the Union, make it almost a patent of nobility that their ancestors resisted to the end the appeals of Castlereagh and the wiles of Fitzgibbon.

The first Marquis of Dufferin, who raged against what he called the "madness" of Gladstonian Home Rule, never wearied of recalling the retort

of his great-grandfather, Sir John Dufferin, when the Government of the day sought to purchase his vote for Pitt's scheme by the offer of a peerage. "Your crest," said an emissary of the Castle, who was examining the plate on his dinner-table, "is a very pretty one, but would be improved by a coronet." "I fear," replied Sir John, "the motto *per vias rectas* has escaped your notice."

Politicians as sensitive of their dignity as Dufferin were by no means common, but it is a fallacy to assume that some special virus in Irish life caused bribery and corruption to flourish with a rankness unknown elsewhere. As a matter of fact little was done in College Green that had not long been common form at Westminster. The difference is that whereas the Irish for over a century have been busily dragging the Union scandals into the light of day, English historians glide tenderly over episodes not a whit less shameful in their own annals. If the members of the Irish Parliament succeeded in selling their country, not a few English Parliamentarians were quite prepared to sell theirs on the same terms.

When George III. was fashioning his scheme of personal government, which threatened the liberties of the English people as they had not been threatened since the days of the Stuarts, he had no difficulty in securing support so long as he was prepared to pay for it with offices and bank-notes. "The King's Friends," as his drilled and disciplined legionaries delighted to call themselves, have been admirably described by Sir George Trevelyan.

"When a division was called they went forth into the Lobby, or remained seated in the body of the House, at a whispered word of command from the Secretary of the Treasury. They cheered Lord North's speeches; they placed his Bills on the Statute Book; and they voted him all the national money which he demanded in the well-grounded expectation that a substantial portion of it would sooner or later find its way into their own pockets. However inexcusable might be the errors of his Majesty's Ministers, and however formidable might be the calamities which their policy entailed upon the country, they were sure of immunity so long as the majority of their supporters were the bribed and submissive members for bribed and subservient constituencies."

Ministers had a cynical disbelief in promises unless the bargain was clenched by a cash payment, and to judge by a curious note from Lord Saye and Sele in the *Grenville Correspondence*, members of either House blushed to refuse rather than to accept a bribe. Writing to the Prime Minister in 1763 Lord Saye and Sele, after protesting his readiness to support the Administration, continues: "To show the sincerity of my words (pardon, sir, the perhaps over-niceness of my disposition) I return enclosed the bill for £300 you favoured me with, as my good manners would not permit my refusal of it when tendered by you." If this sort of inducement was considered necessary in the case of heads of historic houses, it is easy to understand what arguments would be employed

with needy Irish landlords swamped in oceans of claret with mortgages like millstones tied about their necks. Sir Robert Walpole protested that he was "obliged to bribe members not to vote against, but for, their conscience"; and on the other side of the Irish Sea the belief was equally strong that the labourer in the parliamentary vineyard was worthy of his hire. Bribery, in short, was the orthodox method of making and keeping a ministerial majority.

The marvel is not, as some appear to think, that the Union was finally carried by corruption, but that Grattan's Parliament, with all the odds against it, managed to survive for eighteen years. From the first powerful influences on both sides in English politics set themselves to ensure the failure of the experiment. Nor was hostility confined to the professed apostles of reaction. Fox, whose outlook was more in harmony with modern ideas than that of any of his fellows, solemnly declared in public that his Government had made "a complete, absolute and perpetual surrender of the British legislative and judicial supremacy over Ireland." In private he wrote, "If either the parliamentary reform in any shape, however modified, or any other point, claimed by the Volunteers, be conceded, Ireland is irretrievably lost for ever." As it was obvious that without Parliamentary reform the Irish House of Commons would be a pliant instrument in the hands of an Executive which looked to Westminster for its instructions, the conclusion is irresistible that Fox, though he

might be willing to grant the shadow of independence, was as determined as Fitzgibbon to deny the reality.

Viewing the question, as in fairness one should, from the standpoint of English statesmen, there is something to be said for their attitude. They saw Ireland always in the light of American precedents which showed, or rather seemed to them to show, that there was no half-way house between self-government and absolute separation. But with a fatuity as great as that which ensured the loss of North America these politicians, almost before the echo of the speeches in which they acclaimed and endorsed Grattan's demand had died away, were laying plans, the inevitable result of which was, as Laurence Parsons warned the Executive, "to teach the people that nothing short of separation would attain for them good government." The official policy, pursued without a hint of disguise, was to stereotype a system which both friends and foes knew to be impossible by marshalling against the forces of reform every weapon that might sap the independence of opponents or purchase the support of men who, in Dr. Johnson's phrase, saw in patriotism "the last refuge of a scoundrel."

"The sale of peerages," said Curran ten years before the Union, "is as notorious as that of the cast horses in Castle Yard; the publicity the same, the terms not very different, the horses not warranted sound, and the other animals warranted rotten. When arguments fail we are threatened!

A million will be expended in bribing the country at the next election—to make us what? A catacomb of ministerial mummies—not a scene of honest contest, not a temple of liberty, but a den of thieves." Viceroys had no difficulty in purchasing a majority that might be trusted to act in the interests of England provided always that these interests did not directly menace the existence of the Irish Parliament. Gambetta's warning to France about Alsace, " Always think of it, never speak of it," sums up the attitude of the rulers of Ireland towards the project of a Union in the years that elapsed between the Declaration of Independence and the Rebellion of 1798.

On the other hand, the colonists believed that they occupied an impregnable position which could be shaken neither by English Ministers nor Irish Catholics, since it was in their power to use England to maintain the Protestant oligarchy and at the same time to rally Catholic support against any attempt to deprive them of their privileges which threatened to infringe Irish independence. To run with the hare and hunt with the hounds in this fashion required no less nerve than skill if dangerous obstacles were to be successfully surmounted. The Ascendancy managed cleverly enough till the shadow of the French Revolution fell across their path, and reaction found itself confronted with the challenging figure of revolutionary democracy.

The creed that nerved the ragged levies of the Republic to hurl back the invaders at Valmy fired in Ireland the colder blood of the Presbyterians of

the north. This may seem strange to those to whom Ulster to-day is the home of lost causes, but the development was strictly in accordance with the orthodox Ulster tradition. Calvinism makes naturally for Republicanism when Calvinism is not the dominant force in a State; and as the Presbyterians had used the American revolt, planned and executed largely by Ulster emigrants, to secure the independence of the Irish Parliament, so they saw in the principles preached in France a lever which would enable them to make the Dublin Parliament not merely independent of Westminster but representative of Ireland.

Previous demands for reform had failed because they were sectional demands which the Executive was able to disregard without endangering its position. Under the influence of the new gospel of democracy it became possible to unite forces which had hitherto dissipated their strength in fruitless broils, and to combine Catholics and Protestants in a common movement as Irishmen. To have sounded this call to unity is Wolfe Tone's great contribution to politics. The impulse had been felt in Belfast before Tone gave it expression, but his energy, organising genius, and, above all, his crusading fervour overbore the most formidable obstacles.

Tone was aided in his task by the fact that as a Protestant acting as secretary of the committee appointed by Irish Catholics to secure their elementary political rights, he occupied a position which enabled him to interpret the minds of men

of both creeds to one another. His critics are fond of arguing that as there was no permanent reconciliation of the religions Tone's work was from the first a failure. It is true that Presbyterians were no more enamoured of Catholicism as Catholicism after the taking of the Bastille than before it, and equally true that Catholics, who accepted the doctrines of liberty, equality, and fraternity, did not on that account revise their opinion of the theological tenets of the Shorter Catechism. As a Deist, whose views had more in common with the philosophy of Voltaire than with Vatican decrees or the dogmas of John Knox, Tone may have underrated the depth and intensity of the prejudices he strove to eliminate, but it cannot be denied that in striving to eliminate them he was acting in the spirit of true Christianity. Yet certain controversialists do not hesitate to denounce this virtue as a crime, and make it not the least of Tone's offences that he as a lay politician sought to do for his fellow-Protestants what those to whom they looked for spiritual guidance had left undone. Needless to say neither Tone nor his colleagues had any intention of interfering in matters of doctrine. The pith of their creed was that differences of religious doctrine should not exclude co-operation in political affairs between various sections of the community, a view which is nowadays, outside Ulster, regarded as axiomatic, but was then denounced as a final proof of the poisonous tendencies of Jacobinism.

All the evidence goes to strengthen the conclu-

sion that a moderate scheme of reform, honestly designed to abolish the most glaring of existing inequalities, would have satisfied everyone except a negligible minority of extremists. The Catholic demands, far from being excessive, were so scrupulously moderate that during the early years of the United Irish movement the fear of the popular leaders was that the Government would buy off Catholic opposition by partial concessions, and thus torpedo any genuine scheme of Parliamentary reform. On the other hand, the United Irishmen bore no resemblance to the iconoclasts whose hammer-strokes had demolished the foundations of the old order in France. Reform, not revolution, was their watchword. Even after it was obvious that, to quote the Memoir in which Addis Emmet, O'Connor, and MacNevin embodied their views, "it would be as easy to obtain a revolution as a reform, so obstinately was the latter resisted," they advanced towards Republicanism, according to themselves, only "with a timid step." When the dissolution of the Open Society in 1794 made it clear that the Government were determined to repress the popular demands by force, the secret organisation altered its test for membership merely by omitting the words "in parliament" from its claim for "an equal representation of all the people of Ireland." "The test," the Memoir declares, "embraced both the republican and the reformer, and left to future circumstances to decide to which the common strength should be directed; but still the whole

body, we are convinced, would stop short at reform."

Statesmen with any claim to the title would have aimed at strengthening the moderates at the expense of the extremists; and there can be little doubt that had a lead been given to Grattan and his fellows the movement would have developed along peaceful lines. But, instead of weakening opposition, it was the set purpose of the men who controlled the Irish Executive to intensify it. This has been denied on the ground that no set of politicians, however wrong-headed their views might be, would commit themselves to so insane a policy. There was, as we shall see, method in the Castle madness.

John Fitzgibbon, whose services were rewarded by the Irish Chancellorship and the earldom of Clare, was never accused by his bitterest enemies of lacking either intelligence or insight. On the contrary, long before *real politik* became a formula on the lips of politicians, he had mastered the difficult art in all its complexities; and his manœuvres during the stormy decade that preceded the extinction of the Irish Parliament justify his claim to be regarded, in a truer sense than Pitt, as the "Father of the Union." Fitzgibbon, whose policy was as logical and clean-cut as that of Wolfe Tone himself, recognised from the hour that the United Irish Society was founded that his real opponent in Ireland was the briefless barrister who wrote pamphlets for the Whig Club. Political opposition was sharpened by personal antagonism.

According to Tone's son, the Chancellor was one of the few enemies his father ever made; but it was characteristic of Tone that he admired Fitzgibbon for his uncompromising devotion to his creed. "He is," he said, "at least an open and avowed enemy; he takes his party, such as it is, like a man who expects no quarter, and is therefore determined to give none."

If Tone stands in history as the type of the English settler who has become more Irish than the Irish, Fitzgibbon is the outstanding example of that much rarer class, the Irish Gael, who is politically more English than the English. He sprang, according to Mr. Litton Falkiner, "from a sept long identified with the County Limerick, and accounted among the most Irish of Irish families in religious and national sentiment." Fitzgibbon's father was a convert from Catholicism who, as the reward of changing his faith, realised a fortune of over £100,000 at the bar. Whether his religious convictions were sincere or not it is beyond doubt that his son was the most furious Protestant of his time. The basic principle of his creed was, as he informed the Irish House of Lords, that "the whole Catholic population of Ireland, by virtue of their religious belief, should be absolutely and for ever excluded from all share of political power."

It is usual to depict Fitzgibbon as a stiff-necked and embittered bigot who hated the race he had deserted, and was vowed to accomplish its destruction. Though there is no lack of evidence to con-

firm this view, in my opinion, it does not reveal the whole man. He preached a creed which even his admirers admitted was woefully narrow and reactionary, but at every stage of his career he displayed an unrivalled sense of political realities. Wholly untroubled by qualms as to the legitimacy of using Machiavellian methods to accomplish his ends, these ends, hateful as they are to modern minds, represented, I believe, Fitzgibbon's profound convictions. He may have been a cynic and a despot, but he was free from the vice of hypocrisy, and amongst the petty politicians who intrigued in College Green and jobbed in Dublin Castle he stands out like a tower. Nor does he lose in comparison with the greater statesmen of his era. Wilberforce relates that after the Union when the Earl of Clare from his place in the Upper House was calling, as was his wont, for fire and sword to tame the degraded Irish, and pouring scorn on the Catholic claims, Pitt, who had entered the Chamber, listened for a few moments to the tirade and then stalked angrily out with a gesture of contemptuous disgust. The object of Wilberforce is to laud Pitt's sensitive delicacy as contrasted with Clare's brutal bigotry, but he conveniently forgets that Clare was only defending the policy which as Pitt's agent he executed in Ireland. No protest was uttered by Pitt against what Dublin Castle did, but he was shocked beyond expression that Clare should boldly champion its methods in public. The episode might fitly serve as a parable of English rule in Ireland

since the Union. It has become automatic for British statesmen to strike an attitude of outraged virtue when confronted with the misdoings of Dublin Castle, yet few of them from Pitt onwards have hesitated to avail themselves of every weapon in its armoury.

Fitzgibbon's political philosophy can be put without difficulty into a single sentence. The native Irish, according to him, were "neither civilised nor civilisable," and whatever the nominal form of Government may be, the reality must be a despotism which would maintain Ascendancy unbroken. This view was also the view of the overwhelming majority of the Irish Parliament. Where Fitzgibbon differed from his fellows, however, was that he had the insight to discern that the sole hope of maintaining Protestant Ascendancy was to surrender the shadow of independence for the reality of domination. As a young lawyer of thirty he began his political career by opposing Grattan's Declaration of Right. "Shall it be said," he cried, "that we are to be terrified by an armed people crowding to the Bar?" Continuing, he warned the House of Commons that to repudiate the authority of British statutes, as Grattan and his party sought to do, was to endanger the titles of Protestant estates. Twenty years later, Clare used the same argument as the final justification of the Union scheme. "The whole power and property of the country," he said, "has been conferred by successive monarchs of England upon an English colony, composed of three sets of English

adventurers who poured into this country at the termination of three successive rebellions. Confiscation is their common title, and from their first settlement they have been hemmed in on every side by the old inhabitants of the island, brooding over their discontents in sullen indignation. What was the security of the English settlers for their physical existence at the Revolution? And what is the security of their descendants at this day? The powerful and commanding protection of Great Britain. If, by any fatality, it fails, you are at the mercy of the old inhabitants of the island."

It was Fitzgibbon's life-work to make these doctrines, which when first enunciated cost him his seat for Dublin University, the fundamental principle of Irish government. There has been scarcely a Unionist pronouncement for a century the pith of which is not to be found in his speeches, for he was one of the few professors of the creed who had not only a coherent philosophy of politics but possessed in a rare degree the gift of effective expression. Fitzgibbon lacked the glow of passion and the imaginative beauty that make Grattan's fame as an orator imperishable, but his skill in marshalling arguments, his instinct for the weak joints in his opponent's armour, and the smashing force of his blows rendered him the most formidable of parliamentary antagonists. If Grattan went into action like a stately three-decker, with all sail set and the sunlight gleaming on broad ensigns and gay uniforms, Fitzgibbon had not a

little of the starkness and strength of a modern battle-cruiser.

Latter-day critics, especially in Ireland, have been content to label Fitzgibbon anti-national, as if the epithet adequately defined his attitude. But the anti-nationalism on which they lay such stress, as Mr. Erskine Childers shows in his *Framework of Home Rule*, was inspired less by racial antipathies than by a rooted hatred of democratic principles and beliefs. Clare's detestation of the northern Presbyterians was every whit as strong as his loathing of southern Catholics, nor did it spring from dislike of their theological views but of their republican bias, which, he informed the Irish Parliament, was subversive alike of religion and monarchy, of property and the English connection.

Clare lives in history as the most fanatical champion of the divine right of England to rule Ireland according to her will. In the Union debates, he declared, he would gladly entrust the government of Ireland to the British Parliament even though that parliament did not admit a single Irish representative. Yet the United Irish leaders themselves had not so fierce a contempt for English politicians as Clare when ministers ventured to differ from him. He denounced them in unmeasured terms in his private correspondence, and while nominally acting in alliance with them, he never hesitated to intrigue against their policy with the most amazing unscrupulousness. By secretly playing on the prejudices of George III.

he induced the King to reject the Emancipation proposals in the Union scheme, an act of treachery to his colleagues which no special pleading can palliate. After the Union was passed Cornwallis, who had urged in vain that concessions "which if now liberally granted might make the Irish a loyal people will be of little avail when they are extorted on a future day," warned the Cabinet that if Lord Clare and his friends had their way they would ruin British government in Ireland. Fortunately for the British Government, Clare died within twelve months of the opening of the Union Parliament to the undisguised relief of his English masters. His death, Abbot, the Chief Secretary, cheerfully records in his journal, "delivered the Irish and also the British Government from great trouble."

Clare had no illusions about the "garrison" in whose cause he was nominally fighting. "God bless them all!" he wrote sarcastically in one of his private letters, "they hold character and consistency in very laudable contempt, and if they are but paid will in the next session unsay everything which they have been saying and swearing in this." He did not hesitate to use language equally strong in parliament. They were, he told them to their faces, "a puny and rapacious oligarchy," and he declared he was "sickened with this rant of Irish dignity and independence." One can understand Clare's angry disgust. It was not the rapaciousness of the oligarchs that roused his wrath, but their failure to realize the limitations

which must be accepted if it was to be practised with impunity.

Clare was in perfect agreement with Castlereagh's statement to Lord Camden in a letter written as late as January, 1793, that once independence had been granted the alternatives were "to govern Ireland by reason or unite her to Great Britain by force." Castlereagh at the time this letter was written, still believed in government by reason, and extracts from the document might have been comments by a moderate like Sir Horace Plunkett on the Cabinet drift towards Carsonism after the declaration of war with Germany. "Under the spirit of the Constitution, the reformers," Castlereagh declares, "are justified in demanding change. When they have power they may abuse it—so may you; but when they are wild enough to do so, then your correction may be more reasonably applied. It is for you to determine whether you will embark in the reconquest of Ireland at the same time as you proceed against France and her principles. Yet even at this moment there is but one voice, that when England draws the sword that of Ireland is unsheathed with it. The wildest revolutionists hold no other language. Instead of concession, every point has been a matter of conquest, and discontent has been the consequence, when gratitude might have been the national feeling. You have tied the hands by closing the mouths of all your real friends in this country, and relied upon a parcel of sharks." This view, Castlereagh insists, was supported not only

by professed reformers, but by "those immediately interested in resisting it—I mean the great borough proprietors." "These old sages," he continues, "have discovered that reform is a wise and necessary measure, and they, very prudently, would rather effect it themselves than let others plunge the country into confusion or let the work fall into other hands."

Clare's mission, as he saw it, was less to demonstrate that government by reason was impossible than to insist that a union with Great Britain offered the sole hope of maintaining the privileges which were for his fellows the Ark of the Covenant. Anti-Catholic prejudice was the weapon first selected by him, but republican developments in France and their reaction on Ireland furnished him with an instrument which he used no less effectively than Wolfe Tone, though with a very different object. To Clare the democratic upheaval was a potent argument to deter Ascendancy from attempting to reform grievances on its own account, while at the same time it could be manipulated to induce Pitt to destroy Irish independence by pleas about the danger to the unity of the Empire.

There can be little doubt that Fitzgibbon's policy was deliberately to stir up trouble by repressive measures, and force his opponents to an open trial of strength. As Newenham, the most careful and least biassed of contemporary publicists, put it, if the Executive did not actually concoct rebellion it pursued a policy that made rebellion

inevitable, knowing that the Union "never would have been carried into effect without the occurrence of a rebellion, similar in respect of its attendant and previous circumstances to that of 1798." The same charge is brought by Maria Edgeworth, who argues that the Government, having the Union scheme in view, "were desirous that the Irish aristocracy and country gentlemen should be convinced of the kingdom's insufficiency to her own defence against invasion or internal insurrection." Castlereagh, in a letter written after it was decided to despatch large contingents of English troops to suppress the rebellion, confirms Maria Edgeworth's view. "I consider it peculiarly advantageous," he says, "that we shall owe our security entirely to the interposition of Great Britain. I have always been apprehensive of that false confidence which might arise from an impression that security had been obtained by our own exertions. Nothing would tend so much to make the public mind impracticable with a view to a future settlement without which we can never hope for any permanent tranquillity."

As a matter of fact the Rebellion was broken before these reinforcements crossed the Channel, but throughout the Union debates Dublin Castle's loudest war-cry was that Protestantism and Property in Ireland could be safeguarded only by the English sword. This argument backed by bribes carried the day, and the passing of the Act of Union justified Clare's contempt for "the puny and rapacious oligarchy" whose mem-

bers came to heel so meekly at the crack of his whip. Few aristocracies in history cut so pitiable a figure. Even the decadent French nobles of the old *régime* were capable of a gesture when they renounced their titles, and their bishops dedicated church property to the State. The Irish Ascendancy, which had prated so loudly of liberty as long as liberty meant class rule, ran shrieking behind British bayonets when other classes ventured to demand not equality but a measure of fair treatment.

Unionists urge that the surrender of Irish national rights was made out of devotion to English interests, and that opposition to the concession of these rights to-day has its roots in the same motive. Nationalists as a rule play into their opponents' hands by tacitly accepting this explanation, and proceeding to arraign Unionists on this account as traitors to Ireland. In point of fact the Irish garrison was as little concerned about English as about Irish interests; for nearly a century and a quarter it has sacrificed one as readily as the other in the endeavour to maintain its cherished privileges. Its members accepted the Union on the assurance of Fitzgibbon and his fellows that only by this means could Ascendancy be preserved; and every measure which threatened to endanger this Ascendancy, however vital it might be to the welfare of the British Empire, has been met by the dominant minority with a resistance which did not stop short of menaces of open rebellion.

The Union, as I have said, came into existence as part of the defensive system organised by aristocratic Europe to withstand the assaults of democracy. Originally it was no more than an insignificant *point d'appui*, but though the European fortifications have long been destroyed, the redoubts and gun positions captured, and the underground passages blown up, Unionism managed to survive like a machine-gun nest in a shell-hole. From Lord Clare in the eighteenth century to Sir Edward Carson in the twentieth the champions of the system have been well aware that the triumph of democracy would sound the death-knell of their hopes. Not so long ago it was considered sufficient to show that Irish Nationalists aimed at establishing the principle of popular rule in order to secure the rejection of their claims. Lecky and Froude, widely as they differed in their interpretations of the facts of Irish history, unite in driving home the conclusion that the unpardonable sin of Nationalism is less that it claims self-governing powers than that it insists on majority rights. Froude demanded the abolition of constitutional forms and the setting up of an Asiatic despotism; Lecky ends his history with a wail against the atrocious unfairness of a system under which one Protestant could no longer outvote four Catholics. It is true that nowadays these arguments are not so openly used, except perhaps by minor satellites of Sir Edward Carson. But the idea that the Orange tail should wag the Nationalist dog is as firmly held in theory,

and almost as universally applied in practice, as it was when Castlereagh dominated Dublin Castle.

The favourite argument employed to recommend the Union to Irish Catholics was that it would guarantee them a tribunal no less powerful than impartial before which to plead their claims. An Ascendancy faction exercising uncontrolled power in Dublin could not, or would not, so the contention ran, endanger this power by making terms with its opponents, and under fear of imperilling its rights must continue to deny justice. Westminster, however, was strong enough, it was said, to hold the balance even, and being detached from local prejudices and free from the antagonisms that had dug so deep a gulf between Irish parties, was admirably fitted to act as a court of arbitration to decide their differences. To compare small things with great the Imperial Parliament was to play the part which under the new system of European statecraft has been reserved for the Council of the League of Nations. But as Ireland is to have no place in the League so were the overwhelming majority of the Irish people excluded from the Parliament.

I do not agree with those who argue that if the concessions which Pitt offered as a bait to obtain Catholic support for his proposals had been granted the difficulties and disasters that flowed from the Union would have been avoided. Pitt's scheme was wholly vicious in principle, and its machinery was so devised that even the co-operation of all

parties could not have ensured smooth working. The events that followed O'Connell's victory in 1829 also made clear that an Emancipation Act on the Statute Book by no means implied emancipation in the practical affairs of every-day life which it was the end and aim of Catholic effort to secure. The removal of legal barriers was of small avail so long as administrative power remained in the hands of an oligarchy which on social and sectarian grounds was determined to keep Irish Catholics in the position of serfs and helots. Fitzgibbon provided the arguments which encouraged George III. to declare that Emancipation was "the most Jacobinical thing he had ever heard of," and that any minister who urged him to consent to it was tempting him to break his Coronation Oath and would be reckoned as " his personal enemy." But had Fitzgibbon failed to sway the King, nothing is more certain than that he and his fellows had the power as well as the will to organise an anti-Catholic boycott in Ireland which would have effectively nullified paper decrees emanating from Westminster.

There could be no hope of improvement in Ireland without a radical change in the attitude of the Irish aristocracy towards the mass of their fellow-countrymen. If Pitt's promise of Catholic Emancipation did not foreshadow such a change in the near future, it is beyond doubt that the repudiation of the promise was a declaration to all concerned that the Union scheme would merely perpetuate in a more aggravated form the evils of the existing

system. This was plain not only to its opponents but to its most vehement defenders.

Castlereagh, in a paper written to prove that Emancipation was "essentially necessary to mitigate if it cannot extinguish faction," declared, "if the same internal struggle continues Great Britain will derive little beyond an increase of expense from the Union." "If she is," he proceeded, "to govern Ireland upon a garrison principle, perhaps, in abolishing the separate parliament, she has parted as well with her most effectual means as with her most perfect justification. The Union will do little in itself, unless it be followed up." Yet this conviction, far from giving pause to Castlereagh and his colleagues, inspired them to strain every nerve to run up in hot haste their structure on foundations whose rottenness they did not attempt to deny.

The excuse has been put forward that the framers of the Union in proceeding with their scheme after the concessions to the Catholics had been cut out were impelled by what they felt to be the urgent military necessities of the struggle with Napoleon. Pitt retired from the Government indeed, but on the plea of "getting on with the war" he gave his full parliamentary support to the Addington Administration, whose Irish Lord Chancellor took the first opportunity of proclaiming his faith in these words: "I said that this country must be kept as a garrisoned country. I meant a Protestant garrison." The wife of the Viceroy, who thoroughly agreed with the Chancellor's opinion that

"the Catholics of Ireland must have no more political power," boasted on her own account that "Lord Hardwicke's is the only Administration that has never given the heads of the Catholic clergy an invitation to the Castle; he in no way recognises them further than the law admits them to be priests."

Pitt's acquiescence, in spite of his promises, pledges, and convictions, in this outlawry of a people on account of its religion, may have seemed to him a sacrifice which he was compelled to make in order to win the war. In the eyes of the shrewdest of his contemporaries it appeared much more likely to lose it.

Sydney Smith stated the argument on the other side with no less wit than sense in his famous apologue of the British Prime Minister as captain of a frigate attacked by a corsair of immense strength and size. "The first thing he does," according to the *Plymley Letters*, "is to secure twenty or thirty of his prime sailors who happen to be Catholics, to clap them in irons, and set over them a guard of as many Protestants; having taken this admirable method of defending himself against his infidel opponents, he goes up on deck, reminds his sailors in a very bitter harangue that they are of different religions, exhorts the Episcopal gunner not to trust to the Presbyterian quartermaster; issues positive orders that the Catholics should be fired at upon the first appearance of discontent; rushes through blood and brains examining his men in the Catechism and thirty-nine Articles, and

positively forbids everyone to sponge or ram who has not taken the Sacrament according to the Church of England."

Modern England scoffed with Sydney Smith at the bigotry of "Sepulchral" Spencer Perceval, and marvelled that "Lord Sidmouth and all the anti-Catholic folk" could not forsee, as the author of *Peter Plymley* warned them, "that they will hereafter be the sport of the antiquary, that their prophecies of ruin and destruction from Catholic Emancipation will be clapped into the notes of some quaint history, and be matter of pleasantry even to the sedulous housewife and the rural dean." Yet present-day statesmen when their opportunity came proved no less subservient than the Pitts and no less bigoted than the Percevals, and justified up to the hilt Sydney Smith's contention that "the moment the very name of Ireland is mentioned the English seem to bid adieu to common feeling, common prudence, and common sense, and to act with the barbarity of tyrants and the fatuity of idiots."

Islington
Public
Libraries.

Chapter II.

THE GARRISON.

Dirges are still sung, though by a steadily dwindling band of mourners, over the hard fate of the Irish aristocracy. Some of the champions of this particular lost cause would have us believe that the men who bartered away political independence in a panic fear of democracy, were more sinned against than sinning, and needed only an opportunity, which England by her baleful influence denied, to reveal themselves as born administrators and statesmen. In a sense it is true that the Union system sapped the strength of its beneficiaries. Had the Irish gentry been left to fight their own battles they might have been forced to make compromises and surrenders, but they must have acquired some of the virtues of a ruling race. Relying, as they were content to do, upon outside aid to maintain their position, they could not hope to escape the process of deterioration that inevitably sets in when an Ascendancy can point to no better reason for its existence than the backing of foreign bayonets.

This fact has been obscured in Ireland by Unionists anxious to saddle the blame for their failures on other shoulders, and also by Nationalists who thought any weapon good enough that might

be used to score a point against English policy, or who believed, as a good many of them did, that some miracle would happen to transform evictors and landgrabbers into self-sacrificing patriots. Radically vicious as the Union scheme was, it contained nothing that would have prevented the ruling classes from doing their duty to the community. Politically, Pitt established a despotism, and all despotisms are inherently bad. But the landlords had it in their own hands to make it a benevolent despotism, had they so willed. Their opinions alone carried weight; the administration existed merely to give effect to their views. In the rural districts they exercised an autocracy as unquestioned as that of the Russian boyar of pre-Emancipation days; in the towns their authority was akin to that of Venetian oligarchs.

If paternalism were possible in a modern State, Ireland at the beginning of the nineteenth century offered the best possible field for the experiment. And it is important to remember that a successful paternalism could alone justify the denial to the mass of the Irish people of elementary popular rights. But the ruling faction, so far from displaying magnanimity, was blind even to its own interests. Its domination was not only brutal, it was almost incredibly inefficient, and was destined, as every impartial observer saw, to react as disastrously in the long run on the fortunes of those who imposed it as on the victims who were coerced into submission.

Even the inconsiderable handful of landlords

who sought to practise paternalism made a woeful hash of the business. The system at its best has been admirably described in the vivacious pages of Mrs. Callwell's *Old Irish Life*. Her heroes are the Martins of Ballinahinch of whom she is a descendant, and her narrative, based on the reminiscences of relatives whose memories went back to the passing of the Act of Union, is the best account that has been written, or is likely to be written, of the intimate life of Anglo-Irish landlordism in the heyday of its power.

That life at first sight is not without its attractions. The Martin estates covered over one hundred square miles of the wildest part of Connemara, and one of their favourite boasts was that their avenue was thirty-six miles long. The housekeeping was on a scale that would have delighted Gargantua. A sheep every week and a bullock once a month were the normal allowance, together with supplies of "venison from the red deer on the mountains, salmon, oysters, and lobsters from the fisheries in the landlocked harbour." Tea was sparingly used since its price was as high as twelve shillings a pound, and ready-money was short in Galway where even card stakes were made in live stock—a sheep a point and a bullock on the rubber being a recognised rule in whist. But wine was regarded as a necessity of life which must be procured at all hazards. The Martins brought their own port from Lisbon and their sherry from Spain; not a few of their neighbours who had less cash or poorer credit preferred to smuggle their supplies.

A household servant received £4 a year, and labourers were paid fivepence a day, so that the Martins had at their disposal a retinue almost as large as a regiment. These dependents lived on the produce of the estate, and the head of the Martin family insisted that their keep and that of the brood of daughters, cousins, and aunts who found shelter under his roof cost nothing at all. "It was no part of his economy," as Mrs. Callwell says, "to consider that the large quantities of home-grown products which we consumed represented money in another form." Hospitality was as sacred a duty as it is to an Arab sheik. Even strangers were not permitted to pass the house at Ballinahinch without entering to break bread; and there is a delightful story of a Martin pressing an invitation to dinner on a neighbour whom he had challenged to a duel on the following morning. To the remonstrances of his second he retorted: "Do you think, sir, that I'd allow Mr. French or any other gentleman to drive past my gate without asking him in to dine? But I'll fight him to-morrow morning all the same, as sure as my name is Martin, whether he'd dined with me or not."

There was another side to this lavish hospitality. Mrs. Callwell relates the comical complaint of the turf-boy, whose duty it was to see that the roaring fires of Ballinahinch never lacked supplies of fuel. "Och ay," he would say, "ivery wan is for ever cryin' up the ould master and his hospitalitee, an' his axin' this wan and that wan to shtop wid him,

but sorra wan thinks of Bartley that has to carry the turf for the whole of thim." Bartley's grievances were probably not very great, but his protest might well have been uttered by the tenants on whose shoulders the real burden fell.

It is true that the Martins, so far from being bad landlords, were amongst the best of their class. If their estates were mostly bog and heather, rents were low. They disliked to press for money and disdained to seize, or "drive," as it was called, the cattle of holders who had fallen into arrear. Nor were they averse from spending money to benefit their tenants when their extravagant hospitality, their contested elections, their endless law-suits—amongst the Galway tribes they were known as the "litigious" Martins—left them with cash in hand. "Humanity Dick," the greatest of his clan, who owed his nickname to the campaigns he waged, not only with speech and purse, but with pistol, against the ill-treatment of animals, was robbed right and left by plausible adventurers who promised to make the deserts of Connemara blossom like the rose, or who lined their pockets at his expense by experiments designed to prove to a sceptical world that buried under the Twelve Pins was mineral wealth as rich as that of Golconda.

The Martins suffered as the burden of mortgages was piled higher and higher, but the tenants who had to pay for all suffered still more heavily. If their rents seemed ridiculously low to outsiders, they were not justified by the economic value of

the holdings, and a single bad season meant not hardship but actual starvation. While the war with Napoleon continued the high prices obtainable for agricultural produce helped to conceal the incurable rottenness of the system. With the drop in prices that followed Waterloo there was no possibility of further disguise, and the widespread distress of 1817 and 1822 pointed clearly to the inevitable end. When at last the catastrophe came in the great Famine of the 'forties, the Martins, like the best of their fellows, went down with the ship, but their sacrifices, honourable as they were to individuals, could not atone for the offence of their long line of predecessors who had steered open-eyed a course that every sane man was aware must end in disaster.

The small Irish farmer was described as a tenant, but his real status was that of the mediæval serf. There is a classic description by Wakefield of the system as it prevailed in Ireland up till a time well within living memory: "The Irish cottier tenant hires a cabin, the worst in the country, with a small patch of potato land at a rent of thirty shillings per annum. He also agrees for the keep of a collop, or half a collop, which is still lower. At the same time he works for his landlord at the small wages of fivepence per day; but when he comes to settle, he receives nothing, as the food of his few sheep is set off against what he charges for labour. In this manner the poor cottier must toil without end; while his family eats up the produce of the small spot of land he has hired. This is

called by the lower classes of the Irish ' working for a dead horse,' that is to say, getting into debt." As Sir George Cornwall Lewis points out, the cottier is to all intents and purposes in a state of villeinage " if his annual wages never exceed his annual rent, and if in fact he never receives, nor can hope to receive, anything."

But it was not resentment at his degraded status that drove the Irish peasant to desperation. His grievance was that though he resigned everything, he did not get in exchange the means to keep body and soul together. Not only was he rack-rented, he was mercilessly squeezed to pay tithes to an alien church in addition to maintaining his own clergymen; and he bore the heaviest share of the county rates which were spent in making roads and bridges to improve the property of large owners and in providing fat sinecures for their sons and nephews. While " lashings and leavings," in a familiar Irish phrase, were the rule at every landlord's table, no matter how barren the acres over which he ruled, his tenants were condemned to sustain life on a diet of potatoes mixed with seaweed, and for bedding had to content themselves with sedge pulled from the bogs.

For all its pride of birth the Ascendancy was an aristocracy only in name. Its spirit was that of the huckster or rather of the flint-hearted usurer who, secure in the possession of a monopoly of one of the necessaries of life, as land was in Ireland, compels by the threat of starvation the surrender of everything which his victims can call their own.

This policy was adopted as a matter of course, and it was with genuine horror and dismay, as at a hideous blasphemy, that the ruling class in the 'thirties read Thomas Drummond's reminder to the Tipperary magistrates that "property has its duties as well as its rights." The Earl of Donoughmore, to whom the warning was addressed, thought the doctrine enunciated by the Under Secretary so subversive of the root principles of landlordism, and so flaming an incentive to crime and outrage on the part of the peasantry, that, as he admitted later before a Committee of the House of Lords, he felt he was performing a public service by suppressing the letter. The conviction that it is treasonable to proclaim that property has its duties, and especially to add, as Drummond did, that the diseased state of Irish society is due to the neglect of these duties, has always been a fixed article of faith with Irish landlords.

In modern times a school of apologists has appeared which, while no longer denying the abuses, seeks to fix the responsibility for them on other shoulders than those of the landlords. They are represented as careless easy-going folk who, to spare themselves unnecessary trouble, gave long leases to middlemen and jobbers and cannot fairly be blamed if these deputies used their power to impose exorbitant rents on the helpless peasantry. This plea will not serve. If it be admitted, then the landlords were obviously *rois fainéants* who discharged no useful purpose in the social economy of the State, and by resigning their

authority to others, whose sole object was to exact the biggest possible return for their money, they betrayed not only the class over which they claimed to rule by right divine, but the class to which they themselves belonged.

Judge Fletcher, one of the few men in high places who faced the realities of the Irish situation in the years that followed the Union, described in a famous charge in 1814 the absentees as "worse than Egyptian taskmasters, who call for bricks without furnishing a supply of straw." In the course of his charge Fletcher made the bold demand that "the Irish peasant might have at least the comforts of an English hog," adding in a sentence that recaptures the vitriolic force of Swift, "an English farmer would refuse to eat the flesh of a hog so lodged and fed as the Irish peasant is."

The reckless subdivision of land and the enormous increase of a pauper population doomed to "poverty and potatoes," which was the outstanding economic feature of the years that followed the Union, is nowadays often held to be a proof less of the viciousness of the land system than of the tender heartedness of the men who controlled it. Through mistaken kindness, so we are asked to believe, landlords acquiesced in a development the inevitable consequences of which must have been obvious to any man capable of drawing simple deductions from plain facts. Unfortunately, those who employ this argument fail to see, or do not wish to see, that the process which they deplore was directly fostered by the landlords for their own

purposes. Subdivision, if it was fatal to the community, helped to swell the rent-roll of the proprietors; and the creation of forty-shilling freeholders was deliberately pushed to extremes not to satisfy the land-hunger of the peasantry, but to increase the political power of their overlords by manufacturing votes which commanded a better market than any other product of an estate.

When the fall in prices made it impossible to pay rents that had been fixed during the artificial demand created by war necessities, and the refusal of the tenants to vote against their consciences made subdivision valueless from the landlord point of view, there was no further question of tolerating a system which, in the opinion of the dominant class, had lost its justification once it ceased to provide them with the maximum of profit. Clearances and consolidation became their watchwords, and they proceeded to depopulate their lands with as little regard for humanitarian scruples as if the business in hand had been the extermination of so many rabbits.

What landlords might have done to benefit their dependents can best be measured by the freedom they possessed to do evil with impunity. They were not content to act merely as rent-chargers, but used their position to establish a tyranny over the social life of the community. Nominally, the right of pit and gallows did not exist; in practice, many owners of great estates had private prisons of their own to which they consigned those whom they chose, in defiance of every legal rule, to de-

scribe as offenders. They also used the State jails at their own will and pleasure, depositing in them prisoners against whom no formal charge had been made, and snapping their fingers at writs of *habeas corpus*. The scandals of the imprisonments ordered by Orange magnates headed by the Earl of Enniskillen which Judge Fox exposed in 1803 are an illuminating example of the fashion in which the Ascendancy overrode not merely the rules of equity but the written law of the land. A Kilkenny magistrate disinterred the body of a man whom he asserted had died of wounds received in an agrarian fray, and buried them in Kilkenny Jail, on the ground that the deceased was a felon and deserved only a felon's burial. Another justice of the peace caused a woman to whom he objected to be kidnapped and deported to America; and a third, who happened to be a strong Sabbatarian, forbade the passage of any wheeled vehicles through Navan on a Sunday, thus holding up the traffic of half a county.

The ukases of landlords acting as magistrates were sometimes effectively challenged when their prohibitions affected others than those immediately under their control, but on their estates there was no appeal from their sovereign will. When the clearances began in earnest, not single cottages but whole villages were wiped out at a stroke, and in several counties landlords ordered hamlets to be levelled to the ground with the object of improving the view from the windows of their mansions. Each estate had its lengthy list of "rules" which

constituted as gross an invasion of the fundamental rights of a free community as the worst atrocities of the *ancien régime*. Revolutionary France avenged with fire and sword the iniquities of the *droit de seigneur;* and Englishmen, who approved that vengeance, shut their eyes to the fact that a generation after the French Revolution this horror in its vilest form was practised in Ireland under the shadow of the British Constitution. Fortunately, landlords who stooped to vileness of this kind were in a small minority, but even men who professed consideration for their dependents vetoed at will marriages amongst their tenants, and imposed a fine of a gale of rent on any man who gave even a night's shelter to a relative without the permission of the rent office.

In addition to insisting that those who occupied his land should work for him, a territorial proprietor claimed the right to decide whether they should or should not work for others in their own time. Nimmo, the famous engineer who built many Irish roads, described to a Committee of the House of Lords in 1825 the autocratic powers exercised by landlords. "The Irish tenant," he said, "being in debt, it is in the power of the landlord to drive his cattle, under the form of distress, to the pound by way of making him pay his rent; but this form of distress is applied not only to the raising of rent, but to the doing of anything else the landlord wants." Thus Nimmo explained that in his own experience when he refused to pay the wages demanded for work on the roads land-

lords had compelled the men to accept a smaller sum by the threat of distraining on them for arrears of rent; and, on the other hand, men had been warned by many proprietors that if they went to work on the road their cattle would be driven next morning to the pound.

It cannot be pleaded in extenuation that these things were deplorable defects in a system which on the whole was accepted by all parties. On the contrary, the tenants never acquiesced in the claim of the landlord to do what he liked with his own. Under duress they might yield unwilling submission, but the overlords were well aware that what they asserted to be their right rested on no other basis than the possession of superior force. The tenants on their side felt morally justified in meeting force with force; and though battles in the strict sense had ended with the '98 Rebellion, from the Union to the Famine guerilla warfare was in full swing over great areas of the country. Evidence given before a Parliamentary Commission in 1824 reveals vividly the conditions under which the gentry were living at that period. Witness after witness stated that in Cork, Tipperary, and Limerick the lower windows of every gentleman's house had been built up with stone and lime mortar, leaving the rooms so dark that artificial light was necessary in the day time, doors were strongly barricaded, sentries mounted by night and day, and fire-arms placed in every bedroom and upon the side-tables at breakfast and dinner-time.

"The tyrant's writ," in the phrase of a contributor to the *Nation*, "was everywhere met by the peasants' gun." It was inevitable that this should be so, for if the landlord had nominally the law on his side he valued its sanctions only in so far as they enabled him to develop to the fullest degree his will-to-power. The real issue was not between law and lawlessness, but between two different kinds of lawlessness, one of which enjoyed the advantage of compelling its opponents to fight with ropes about their necks. However little the peasant might relish the prospect, he had no alternative. If resistance spelled ruin so also did acquiescence. "One of the great mischiefs in Ireland," a witness told the Devon Commission, "is that it seems to be taken for granted that man is a nuisance," and it was the settled purpose of the owners throughout the greater part of the last century that the nuisance should no longer survive to prevent them from doing what they liked with their own.

The towns were ruled by the great proprietors as despotically as the countryside, and with a still more cynical contempt for the idea of *noblesse oblige*. Admirers of autocracy, who sigh regretfully over the diminished influence of the gentry in Irish public life, might turn with profit to the report of the Municipal Commissioners of 1835 for a plain unvarnished narrative of the achievements of paternalism in the generation that followed the Act of Union. Tyranny in the rural areas was at least tempered by the fear of assassination; middle-class town-dwellers who shrank from violent

remedies had no protection against shameless and barefaced robbery.

In spite of an Act passed towards the end of the eighteenth century, it was the fixed policy of the Ascendancy to exclude Catholics from voting rights in the municipalities, much less from the active control of affairs. The large majority of Protestants, it is only fair to add, were hit almost as hard. As a rule the principal proprietor exercised dictatorial powers, and membership of the Common Council was limited to his agents, relatives, and nominees. Representation without taxation was the rule, all freemen being relieved from the payment of municipal tolls and customs from which the greater part of the municipal revenue was derived. Thus the members of the governing body could levy any sums they liked without the slightest fear that their own pockets would suffer in the process. They did much better than this for themselves. Many towns possessed grants of lands, the funds accruing from which were supposed to be devoted to corporate purposes. When the Municipal Commission began to make inquiries it discovered that from the Union onwards these lands had either been grabbed by the big proprietors or had been handed over in perpetuity to their friends and followers at rents that bore no relation to the value of the property. Trust funds were stolen with impunity, and the thieves did not even deem it necessary to cover up their misdeeds.

In Belfast in the early part of the nineteenth

century large sums of money, which charitable persons had placed at the disposal of the corporation for the relief of distress, were called in and divided amongst the members of the governing body of the town. In the same way the revenues from tolls and customs were devoted not to the benefit of the citizens who paid the piper, but to the private profit of the corporators who called the tune. The pungent comment of the Municipal Commissioners on the Corporation of Enniskillen, a close borough under the absolute control of the Cole family, was true of not a few Irish towns. "It supplies no magistracy," the Commissioners declared, "it provides no police, it maintains no gaol, it furnishes no nightly watch, it forms no provision and makes no contribution for the paving, the lighting, or the cleansing of the town. In short, it performs adequately no function, and it is calculated to perform few (and these not the functions of most importance) by which a municipal body, useful and efficient, can administer to the order, the comforts, and the well-being of the community placed under its management."

Instead of assisting the development of the towns it was the policy of the landlords to hinder and restrict it. In Belfast in pre-Union days a proprietor of the more enlightened kind decided to lease land in perpetuity in opposition to the system of short leases by which the Donegall family kept the town in their grip. The offer was readily availed of, and new buildings began to arise, until Lord Donegall's agents, who controlled the town

waterworks, resolved to meet this challenge by flooding out the new tenants. Ultimately, the Donegalls bought out their competitor, and until they in the fulness of time found themselves in the bankruptcy court every brick in Belfast belonged to them, and they levied blackmail at will from the luckless inhabitants under the polite disguise of rent. Belfast in this matter was no worse than other towns. Wakefield, writing of the period after the Union, states as a well-known fact that "houses are dearer in some of the most remote parts of Ireland than in the best parts of London."

All our latter-day reformers raise hands of horror over the decadence of the Irish country towns. "Æ" with fierce denunciatory eloquence has painted better than anyone else their drabness and sordidness. "Better look out on boundless sand and boundless sky, on two immensities," he says, "than on these mean and straggling towns, those disreputable public-houses, those uncleansed footways like miry manure yards. For if one has any soul and any love for beauty he must feel like an anarchist if he strays into an Irish country town, and must long for bombs to wreck and dynamite to obliterate. . . . . They create no wealth, they generate no civic virtues, certainly they manifest none. They are mainly the channels through which porter and whiskey run from breweries and distilleries into the human stomach; and whatever trade there is is distributive only. There is no intellectual life in them. . . . . The Irish country towns only develop mental bogs about

them." The indictment is as true as it is forcible. But "Æ" points out that this degradation is inevitable in a country which has lacked a social order since the time of the clans, and insists that the sole hope of a remedy lies in the creation of a fine organisation of society without which " the ninety and nine odd persons who have no inner light fall into the pit."

If Ireland is now only beginning to undertake a work the foundations of which were laid generations if not centuries ago in every normal country, upon whom does the responsibility rest? There are still people who dream dreams of a beneficient aristocracy disciplining the majority for their own good. As Mr. W. B. Yeats sings:

> " What cared Duke Ercole, that bid
> His mummers to the market place,
> What th' onion-sellers thought or did
> So that his Plautus set the pace
> For the Italian comedies?"

But the Irish aristocrats, unfortunately for this argument, have shown a mentality akin to that of " onion-sellers" in their dealings with the community over which they claimed sovereign rights. I readily admit that popular control, which in its fullest sense is not yet a quarter of a century old, has done little to redeem either the country town or the countryside from degradation and stagnation. It is only fair, however, to remember that the heaviest part of the task so far has been to clear

from the ground the abominations which were the sole legacy of the Ascendancy to posterity.

Amongst other subject races religious and cultural influences have helped to modify the harsh pressure of political and administrative tyranny. In Ireland these influences were mobilised by the ruling class with the direct object of ensuring the perpetual degradation of their inferiors. The fanaticism of a Cromwell or an Alva, however repellent, has at least a certain sombre dignity. By destroying the body they persuaded themselves they might in the long run snatch souls like brands from the burning. The men who dictated the policy of the Established Church in Ireland were inspired by very different aims. They had no qualms about persecuting, but their persecutions lacked even the excuse of honest conviction; and their settled purpose was to employ sectarian means to further purely political ends, and particularly to ensure that their predominance in secular affairs should never be successfully challenged. In this scheme they had no reason to complain of any failure to co-operate on the part of the clergy who acted as if they believed that by making Ireland safe for Ascendancy they would achieve all that was necessary to establish Christ's Kingdom on earth.

It was natural, perhaps, that ecclesiastics who had behind them the secular arm should use this power to advance their claims. But, if not unnatural, it was woefully grotesque that, claiming the title of a missionary church, they should pro-

ceed in defiance of every precept of Christianity to levy forced contributions from the starving peasantry to whom their doctrines were anathema. These divines read no doubt with due unction to their scanty congregations the parable of Dives and Lazarus. But if Dives, instead of merely ignoring Lazarus, had obtained his purple and fine linen by pillaging the beggars at his gate of the bare necessities of life, the parable would have accurately described the record of the Established Church during the generation that followed the Union. I do not dispute that there were good men in its pulpits, and not a few to whom the title "reverend" was due for other than official reasons. Human nature, fortunately, cannot be wholly warped by the worst of institutions, but it would be difficult to find a system as admirably adapted as the Irish Establishment to foster the vices against which the Founder of Christianity winged His bitterest words.

It was in no sense a question of evil doctrines contaminating fine instincts. There was nothing in the formularies of the Church to compel its pastors to exalt the mighty at the expense of the humble and meek, or to plunder in the name of religion the poverty of the mass of the people in order to enrich alien ecclesiastics. These things were part of the civil polity of the time not of the creed of the Church; and when churchmen, consciously or unconsciously, perverted their creed in the interests of so-called statecraft they degraded an institution which might have developed enor-

mous potentialities for good into an instrument of oppression which moved the wrath and indignation not of Catholics alone, but of the whole civilised world. Sectarian bigotry is sufficiently poisonous in itself; to employ it as a weapon in a class-war, and use it, as in Ireland, to ensure the supremacy of an inconsiderable section of the population, is as morally disastrous to those who apparently profit by the policy as it is materially disastrous to the masses from whom it exacts so heavy a toll.

If the Established clergy were not politicians first and priests afterwards, the vast majority of them were openly and undisguisedly vehement politicians in whose *civitas Dei* the Catholics were doomed in perpetuity to be hewers of wood and drawers of water. It was not indeed with the will of the Church that the aristocracy succeeded in unloading the financial burden of the Establishment upon the shoulders of their tenants who abhorred its principles and shared in none of its benefits. Had the clergy possessed the power they would have levied toll no less eagerly on the landlord's demesnes and grazing lands than on the cottier's potato-patch, and the fact that the rich were, as was said, "Whiteboys at heart in the matter of paying tithes" made those who looked to tithes for their revenue more determined that the poor should not evade their legal obligations. Furiously as the two wings of the Ascendancy quarrelled at times about money contributions to the Church, they could be trusted to maintain a united front

against the mass of the people. Good sacerdotal reasons were always forthcoming to justify secular tyranny; on the other hand, ecclesiastical claims, however harsh and unjust, rarely failed to receive the backing of the civil power. The result was to establish a domination which, had it succeeded, would have been fatal to the minds as well as the bodies of its victims.

Religious proselytism was not the real danger. By the time the Union became law it was recognised by all save a handful of fanatics that the general body of Catholics could neither be compelled nor induced to abandon their faith. There is little doubt that the great majority of those who insisted on keeping the controversy on the sectarian plane acted honestly enough according to their lights. The directing minds, however, had other objects in view. As the Penal Laws had been devised less to bring Catholics into the Protestant fold than to strengthen the Protestant grip on Catholic property, so in the nineteenth century the aim was to debar the Catholic from the training which might have permitted him to develop a distinctively Irish culture or to acquire the intellectual power which would make him politically a more formidable opponent. No formal ban, it is true, was issued proclaiming these activities. But in a poverty-stricken country like Ireland, where the mass of the people could obtain education only by proving false to the tenets of their faith, it was obvious that the vast bulk of those who continued Catholic would be compelled to remain unedu-

cated. This was the sphere in which the Established Church won its most sinister triumphs, and the fact that its exertions injured Protestants as severely as Catholics apparently affected it not a whit.

Dr. Cooke, the Presbyterian champion, who in later days fought side by side with the extremists of the Establishment against the compromise of the national system of education, as it was called, has left a graphic description of the sort of schooling which in his early days was available not merely for benighted Papists but for enlightened Presbyterians. Cooke's first school was a thatched cabin with a peat fire in the centre of the floor, a hole in the roof for a chimney, and slabs of oak from the neighbouring bog to serve as seats for the pupils. He left this for a "classical academy," which could boast indeed a roof and two window frames, but no glass, so that if there was light the students also enjoyed "a refreshing portion of rain and snow." Stones were used as seats; and Cooke who had brought a stool was deprived of it by the master, who took it, as he said, "to save himself from the colic."

The school-books were even stranger than the school-house. "I read," Cooke told a Royal Commission long afterwards, "*The Labours of Hercules* and *Destruction of Troy*, *The Seven Champions of Christendom*, *The Romance of Parismos and Parismenos*, *The Chinese Tales*, a book on Transmigration, and *Don Bellionis of Greece*. In history I read *The Irish Rogues and Rapparees*, *Valentine*

and Orson, *The Adventures of Redmond O'Hanlon*, a noted robber, *The Life of Bold Captain Freney*, and others of a similar kind." Barry O'Brien quotes from the report of the Royal Commission of 1825 a list of school-books in general use at that date which is even more astounding than the collection described by Cooke. The works thumbed by children in class included such edifying productions as *The Chevalier de Faublas*, *The Monk*, *Nocturnal Revels*, *Moll Flanders*, *Fanny Meadows* and *The Effects of Love*. One of the Commissioners saw in a Sligo school a child holding the *New Testament* in its hands sitting between two youngsters, one of whom was supplied with *The Forty Thieves* and the other with *The Pleasant Art of Money-Catching*. Another child at a little distance was perusing the *Mutiny Act*, and all four were reading aloud their respective volumes at the same moment.

The national system was, as I have said, a compromise, but a compromise in which the Catholics were called upon to make most of the concessions. They accepted, for instance, Scripture extracts for school-reading prepared by a Presbyterian and a Protestant Archbishop, and Protestants immediately raised the cry that these extracts had been doctored by their own ecclesiastical champions to favour the pernicious principles of Rome. Catholic school-managers agreed that Protestant pastors should be freely admitted to give religious instruction to pupils of their own faith; but Dr. Cooke declared that "Roman" priests would never be

permitted to teach their heresies in schools under the Synod of Ulster, and Dr. Cooke was in the long run powerful enough to carry his point. In parts of Ulster feeling ran so high that Protestant schools in which the national system had been adopted were fired by angry mobs. Gun-clubs were actually formed under the patronage of the Earl of Roden, the Carson of those days, whose members were sworn to fight, in the words of their leader, for "the Holy Word, pure and unmutilated, as the only fit basis of education for Ireland or any Christian country."

Cooke himself took no political harm from the study in his childhood of *The Bold Captain Freney* or *Irish Rogues and Rapparees*, but the founders of the national system decreed that in their school-books Ireland should be *tabu*. Their references to it were all in the spirit of this delicious extract from one of the lessons in geography: "On the east of Ireland is England where the Queen lives; many people who live in Ireland were born in England, and we speak the same language and are called one nation."

Bare-footed urchins in Clare and Connemara were taught to sing, by the orders of Archbishop Whately, what he no doubt believed to be an appropriate hymn—

"I thank the goodness and the grace
That on my birth have smiled,
And made me in these Christian days
A happy English child."

But the worthy Archbishop carefully deleted from the second edition of the lesson-book stray references, which had crept in by some oversight, to "Irish harps," "Shamrocks," and "The Green Banks of Shannon." He expunged also Scott's lines "Breathes there a Man with Soul so Dead," and Campbell's "Downfall of Poland." The rhetoric of

> "When leagued oppression poured to Northern wars,
> Her whisker'd pandours and her fierce hussars,
> Hope for a season bade the world farewell,
> And freedom shriek'd as Kosciusko fell,"

was altogether too strong meat for Irish youths if Robert Emmet's epitaph were to remain unwritten.

Needless to say, the national system was framed without the slightest recognition of the fact that the greater number of those who were supposed to benefit by it were Gaelic speakers. It is not fair, however, to attribute this to the bigotry and narrow-mindedness of the ruling faction. There is, I imagine, little doubt that had a proposal been put forward to give instruction through the medium of Irish it would have been scornfully rejected, but, as a matter of fact, no such demand was made. The Church and the popular leaders were apparently of the same mind as the Ascendancy that education was a mystery which could be imparted to the initiated only in English.

O'Connell in this as in many other things is made the whipping-boy for the offences of others. History shows that so far from leading a movement O'Connell merely expressed the general opinion of his age in his preference for English. As far back as 1788 John Howard, the philanthropist, whose scathing exposure of the horrors of the proselytising Charter Schools did much to open the eyes of the world to some of the grim consequences of endeavouring to make good Catholics into bad Protestants, examined numbers of Irish hedge-schools, where "for the payment of 3s. 3d. per quarter, children were instructed in reading, writing, and accounts." The proficiency of the pupils delighted Howard, but it is obvious from his report that these schools were English in everything except in name. In the same way the Christian Brothers, whose primary schools were founded in 1802, decided not under compulsion but of their own free will to educate through English, so that the National Board in eliminating Gaelic was only following a well-established precedent. The effect, however, was to accentuate the anti-national bias of the educational system, and thus play directly into the hands of those who regarded patriotism in an Irishman as not least of the seven deadly sins.

Chapter III.

THE CASTLE.

The transfer of legislative functions from College Green to Westminster has obscured the fact that the Union instead of inaugurating a new departure was in effect, if not in form, a reversion to the methods which had prevailed before 1782. For all practical purposes it restored the system of the Undertakers by which Great Britain handed over the control of Irish affairs to a group of territorial magnates, with this difference that after 1800 the oligarchs could muster against Irish opposition the overwhelming force of a British Parliamentary majority.

While a Dublin Parliament remained in being there was always a chance that popular opinion, even though it had no direct representation in the chamber, might be sufficiently strong to influence legislation. This danger, as it was described, increased after the grant of the franchise to Catholics in 1793; and the well-founded fear that this development might give a new reality to the struggle between rival aristocratic factions for place and power, was vigorously urged by advocates of the Union. No doubt the "Outs" of the Ascendancy cared as little as the "Ins" for

the special grievances of Catholics, but they were quite prepared to use them as a lever to overthrow their opponents. Once safely established in power they persuaded themselves that they could fall back on Chesterfield's specific for Irish discontents. This Viceroy believed difficulties would be removed by building military barracks all over the kingdom. As his biographer piously puts it, "by this provision he wished to make the inhabitants know that there is a God, a king, and a Government." Clearer-sighted reactionaries saw, however, that the game could no longer be played on the old lines. To retain the power of domination in reality it was necessary to sacrifice the shadow of independence by accepting a nominally subordinate position inside the British Parliament.

If this surrender dealt a blow to the pride of a ruling race, it had the solid advantage of entrenching its members in a position that rendered them practically impregnable against attack. They had not only the guarantee of defence against Irish opposition, but the practical assurance that all the strength of their English allies would be mobilised to maintain their supremacy in Dublin Castle. For a generation this league of reactionaries was successful in excluding the Irish people from even the shadow of representation at Westminster. After a footing had been gained it took forty years of upheaval and two armed rebellions to capture the outworks of the Unionist position by disestablishing the Irish Church and obtaining for the Irish farmer the trifling concessions embodied in the

Land Act of 1870. Outmanœuvred and outvoted in the Commons, Irish Unionism found a citadel in the Upper House, and though that fortress has nominally been forced to hoist the white flag, Parliament has in the interval managed to raise new barriers against Irish freedom.

Like the prudent politicians they were, Irish Unionists did not remain satisfied with parliamentary assurances and safeguards. They prepared on their own account a central redoubt in Dublin Castle, which could be used, as occasion required, either for offensive purposes against Ireland or for defensive purposes against England. The principle upon which they proceeded was that while Westminster might make the laws the power of administering them must remain with the Ascendancy. As they had rigged the parliament in College Green for their own purposes in the eighteenth century, so throughout the nineteenth their efforts were devoted to jobbing their friends and relations into places under the Irish Executive.

The method adopted in the earlier years of the Union—and the practice still survives—is faithfully set forth in the correspondence of Sir Robert Peel who served as Chief Secretary from 1812 to 1818. "Patronage, in most times and in most countries, was in Peel's time and in Ireland," says the editor of Peel's papers, "an engine of government so necessary that it must be understood and used by one who meant to govern. The Chief Secretary being practically also Patronage Secretry, and the country being ruled largely by an

Ascendancy of class and creed and methodised corruption, one of his first duties was to keep together the more venial adherents of the party in power, by promising from time to time, and as occasion offered, paying each man his price. For this purpose, as regards the greater county potentates, Mr. Peel's chief guide at first appears to have been a confidential paper bequeathed to him by a predecessor. Sir Arthur Wellesley, in his own handwriting, had drawn up a list of counties, registering in each the families of greatest influence, their 'objects,' and the favours they had received, with occasional remarks when for the present they ought to be content. To a young administrative hand this was a useful manual, soon supplemented by his own experience."

Cobbett in one of the most effective of his parliamentary speeches startled the House of Commons by his revelation of the amount of plunder required to satisfy the greed of a single Anglo-Irish family. Plunket in a famous philippic against the Union had declared: "For my part I will resist the Union to the last gasp of my existence—to the last drop of my blood—and when I feel the hour of my dissolution approaching, I will, like the father of Hannibal, take my children to the altar and swear them to eternal hostility against the invaders of their country's freedom." "Where," asked Cobbett thirty years later, "is the man who held this language? Is he in Ireland or is he in England? Is he in the ranks of the Ministerialists opposite, or is he in the ranks of the Repealers around me?

He is in Ireland. But what is he there? Lord Chancellor! Yes, this old Hannibal (Hannibal, indeed!) is actually Lord Chancellor of Ireland." Continuing, Cobbett asked: "But what has become of the young Hannibals?" He answered his own question by reading for the edification of the Commons a list of the places which the Plunkets had been lucky enough to secure. These included fat livings in the gift of the Crown, posts as purse-bearers, crown prosecutors, prothonotarys of the court of common pleas, law agents of charitable donations, secretaries to the bankruptcy commission, and counsels to the chief remembrancer. It is a list to make the mouth of place-hunters water in these sadly degenerate days. Ten "Hannibals," to use Cobbett's title, divided amongst themselves every year £22,233 of public money at a time when an income of £2,000 meant not only comfort but affluence.

Whatever their political defects may have been, the Plunkets did not outrage the common decencies of life. Some of their fellows, however, whom English Ministers loaded with honours, had they got their deserts, would have found themselves in the criminal dock instead of in the seats of the mighty.

There is an illuminating correspondence in the *Hardwicke Papers* on the proposal to appoint George de la Poer Beresford to the See of Kilmore by way of discharging the Government obligation to his father, John Beresford, for his support of the Union scheme. When the Primate, William

Stuart, a son of the Earl of Bute, learned of the intentions of the Government, he protested in a letter that goes far to explain the failure of the Established Church not merely to win converts but to command any measure of respect. "I have," the Archbishop explained to Addington, writing of the province of Armagh, "six bishops under me. Three are men of tolerable moral character, but inactive and useless, and two are of acknowledged bad characters. Fix Mr. Beresford at Kilmore, and we shall then have three very inactive bishops, and, what I trust the world has not yet seen, three bishops in one district reported to be the most profligate men in Europe."

"Emolument," the Primate declared in another communication, "is the only object of this young man, whose character is indisputably infamous. His promotion would, in my opinion, be fatal to the Church Establishment. It exposes us to ridicule and contempt. It encourages the profligacy of manners already too prevalent in Ireland; and it holds forth to the young men of this country that morals are of no estimation in the opinion of English Ministers. My understanding suggests no surer method of destroying the Church than by placing irreligious, profligate men in those situations where the people have a right to expect examples of piety and virtue."

Hardwicke was not shocked in the slightest by the revelation of three "of the most profligate men in Europe" discharging episcopal functions in the See of Armagh; but he was deeply annoyed that

the Primate should have dared to remonstrate, and in a confidential letter to Addington denounces "that furious though honest zeal which disclaims everything short of theoretical perfection." Dr. Stuart, however, was a very accommodating zealot. He did not object to Beresford as a bishop provided he was not dumped into the See of Armagh; and in a later communication the Primate suggests that promotion "might have been procured for him in the Catholic part of Ireland where he could do little mischief, but surely it was unnecessary to remove him to the Protestant part where he can do a great deal." Apparently bishops of "indisputably infamous" character were good enough to convince benighted Catholics of the superior virtues of the Establishment. But the Government were determined to have their way and after a few empty threats of resignation, the Primate consented to accept Beresford. "Whatever I may think of that translation and the manner in which it may affect the Establishment in this country," he informs the Lord Lieutenant without a hint of irony, "I cannot entertain a doubt of your Excellency being sincerely inclined to promote the real interests of the Church."

The Archbishop of Armagh surrendered even more tamely when informed by the Viceroy of the Government's intention to elevate to a bishopric Lord Robert Tottenham, a young gentleman of thirty, who, according to the Primate, was "utterly unacquainted with his profession, never having performed any clerical duties." Tottenham's pro-

motion had been guaranteed as part of the price of his father's vote for the Union, but as it concluded the promises of ecclesiastical and legal preferment, Pitt, who had by this time returned to power, suddenly discovered that "the security of the Protestant religion and of order requires the utmost attention to be paid to the purity and respectability of the two Benches." As Hawkesbury, Pitt's new Home Secretary, put it, "the Union engagements have, in recent instances, most materially counteracted these important objects, but it is to be hoped that they are now at an end, and that we may be enabled to revert to those principles, and that practice, which can alone contribute to the tranquillity and happiness of any country."

In Unionist eyes professions of loyalty to Great Britain were, and are, an adequate title to maintenance at the expense of the taxpayer apart from any question of personal worth or record of service. This view flows logically enough from the idea of a garrison which was accustomed to regard itself as always on active service. Nor is it difficult to understand how natural it seemed to the dominant minority that the motive power which made the garrison formidable should be under the absolute control of members of its own order. This was primarily intended as a safeguard against the "Irish enemy," as the Settlers were accustomed to describe the overwhelming majority of the nation; only in modern times has it come to be realised that it afforded an equally valuable guarantee against

the intervention of English politicians for purposes which did not meet with the approval of members of the Irish bureaucracy.

I do not propose to analyse in detail the amazing mechanism of Dublin Castle. The scope of this book forbids an exhaustive examination, and those who wish to study for themselves a political survival no less curious than would be to a twentieth century engineer a power-house for modern purposes equipped with machinery designed by James Watt and George Stephenson, can do so with pleasure and profit in the witty pages of Mr. Barry O'Brien's *Dublin Castle and the Irish People*. I am less concerned with the endless ramifications of departments which, as Lord Dunraven says, " do not even know themselves where their functions begin and where they end," than I am to make clear, if possible, the central principle which gives unity to their bewildering divergencies and complexities.

In an article which appeared in the *Manchester Guardian*, in October, 1917, a writer who signs himself " Ulster Imperialist," has, in my opinion, condensed the essence of volumes of political controversy into a couple of pregnant sentences. " It is," he says, "as though the entire Castle mechanism had been designed with two pulleys, the one fixed upon the main shaft and taking the whole drive, the other loose, revolving idly when power is applied to it. Stated in its most direct and brutal terms, the fixed pulley of Dublin Castle is Prussianism, while the loose one is Democracy,

Liberalism, Modern Imperialism, Nationalism—everything in short for which we and our allies stand as against the whole spirit of our enemy in this war."

"Ulster Imperialist" does not fall into the error of that large band of political writers who believe that it is possible to mend without ending Dublin Castle, and in the vain hope of rousing English Ministers to take action, enlarge on the abnormalties and absurdities of a system, under which forty odd boards, functioning in separate compartments with a sublime disregard for economy or co-ordination, not only fail adequately to discharge the tasks entrusted to them, but dissipate no small part of their energies in endeavouring to poach on their neighbours' preserves. To quote Lord Dunraven again: "Every poor little project has to struggle through a line of departments; and if it runs the gauntlet successfully is probably clubbed on the head in the finish by an omnipotent Treasury clerk in London."

In Whitehall, as in Dublin Castle, there are departments whose object it would seem to be not to get things done but to prevent other departments from doing them; and officialdom everywhere appears, to outsiders at least, to find its supreme happiness in devising systems under which "it is the duty of one department to clean the outside of a window, and the duty of another department to clean the inside, with the not unnatural result that the window is not cleaned at all." In Ireland, however, these things are done not merely with

impunity, but almost as if they were a sacred duty. Nor is this wholly explained by the reason commonly assigned—the inevitable failure of one harassed minister to direct single-handed the affairs of multitudinous boards of whose history, functions, and relative importance he knows as little as he does of the rites and ceremonies of Tibetan lamas. He may sit on the coachman's box and flourish his whip with an air, but this affectation of guiding the team imposes only on those who are unable to distinguish appearances from realities.

It is natural enough that reformers with orthodox ideals of governmental efficiency should imagine that it is sufficient to point out these things to effect a radical change in the system. They forget one vital point. Dublin Castle, whatever may be its shortcomings, is anything but inefficient in accomplishing the ends which its creators intended it to serve. As "Ulster Imperialist" says: "Dublin Castle was designed for the express purpose of carrying out a certain political principle, it was well designed for its purpose, it fulfilled and fulfils its purpose to this day, and it is incapable of being applied to any other purpose still less of being driven in the opposite direction!" This is also the considered opinion of Lord Morley, who on this subject speaks with an authority which few of his successors as Chief Secretary will venture to question. "Why reform the Castle?" he asked satirically. "Isn't it, after all, the best instrument ever invented for ruling a country against the will of its people?"

So long as English policy is directed towards the repression of popular opinion in Ireland, so long will the walls of the Castle remain unbreached, no matter how furious the bombardment of well-meaning reformers. It is merely idle for Unionists to deplore, as they are fond of doing, that as population decreases Castle Boards multiply, and to clamour for co-ordination and economy. Bureaucracy retains its supremacy, less because its nominal masters are in love with it for its own sake, than because they have learned by experience that it alone can give them what they are determined to secure. If it charges a stiff price, the price is paid not by English Ministers, but by the Irish people, which goes far to explain why protests against friction, waste, and overlapping fall on deaf ears.

Only gradually did it dawn on English Ministers —many of them still prefer to shut their eyes to the truth—that the process of strengthening Dublin Castle against Ireland tended also to strengthen it against England. As the complexities of administration increased it became wholly impossible for a single hand to control the levers. Cork Hill was altogether too wary to indulge in open hostilities with Downing Street. Stone-walling tactics were simpler and in the long run more effective, and by burying principles under mountainous masses of detail it became easy to foil the efforts of would-be reforming Chief Secretaries whose activities threatened to ruffle the calm of the Castle Olympians.

As far back as 1845, Peel was in favour of appointing a Catholic to the post of Under-

Secretary. The Viceroy, Lord Heytesbury, while approving of the principle, told Peel bluntly that though the English Cabinet might order the thing to be done, Dublin Castle, in the modern phrase, would "down tools" rather than do it. "Recollect, I entreat you," he wrote, "what the position of the individual himself would be in a government manned, unfortunately, upon the most exclusive principle. No confidential communication would ever be made to him from the provinces. Mr. Pennefather, to whom more than hopes of the succession were held out last year by Lord Eliot, would, I doubt not, immediately resign. There would be nobody left to counsel or direct a Roman Catholic successor. On the contrary, a sort of passive resistance would spring up which would meet him everywhere, but which he would find it almost impossible to grapple with or overcome. Under such circumstances, the machinery which ought to be entirely under his control, would be made to work with the greatest difficulty, and the whole action of the Government would be paralysed." It is amusing to remember that the men who planned this campaign against Catholic officials deafened the world with denunciations of boycotting as a crime peculiar to Irish Nationalists, and their successors to-day quiver with indignation when mere miners or transport workers discuss the feasibility of a policy of direct action.

As a rule, it must be admitted, the Castle methods are more subtle. Barry O'Brien tells a story of an over-energetic Under-Secretary who decided, in opposition to the prevailing custom,

that the Local Government Board papers ought to be sent to him direct. The next morning he entered the Castle yard to find the whole space in front of his office blocked with heavily-laden carts. "What on earth is this?" he asked. "These, sir," said the attendant suavely, "are the papers from the Local Government Board." But the majority of Under Secretaries can be relied on to play the game, and it is against ministerial superiors that officialdom conducts its campaigns. Castle bureaucrats of to-day look back as to a golden age to the years between 1853 and 1868, when the government of Ireland, in a familiar phrase, was summed up as "Larcom and the police." Sir Thomas Larcom was Under Secretary; and while he held office it was the fashion to say that the Lord Lieutenant did the dancing, the Chief Secretary the hunting, and Larcom the work.

In recent times another Under Secretary, Sir Antony (now Lord) MacDonnell, was accused by his opponents of attempting to rule as autocratically as Larcom. The charge was brought not because Sir Antony MacDonnell imitated Larcom's methods, but because he pursued a course diametrically opposed to the orthodox Castle tradition, in that it aimed at substituting co-operation with the Irish people for coercion by the police. I have been told that when he settled, by his personal intervention, a bitter land dispute which had disturbed the peace of a whole countryside, and enjoyed the unprecedented experience for an Under Secretary of being cheered by a grateful peasantry, his reward from his superiors was a sharp repri-

mand. If government officials were cheered in the streets it could only be because they had played fast and loose with the real interests of the Castle.

From the moment Sir Antony MacDonnell assumed office as Under Secretary, he found himself in the thick of a fight, not with the open opponents of the Ministry, but with the agents and instruments of the Irish Executive. He came, so Mr. Wyndham informed the House of Commons, less as a subordinate of the Chief Secretary than as a colleague, and the terms of his appointment conferred upon him a power of initiative and a freedom of action such as none of his predecessors since Drummond could claim to possess. Dublin Castle could not openly oppose a scheme of administrative reform; the scandal of its boards was so gross that the most impenitent reactionary dared not defend it on its merits. Its opportunity came when Sir Antony MacDonnell, after discussions with Lord Dunraven and a significant visit to Lord Lansdowne (then Foreign Minister), drafted a scheme of Devolution to be submitted to the members of the Irish Reform Association.

With almost incredible innocence of Castle methods, the Under Secretary employed his official staff to make type-written copies of his paper. Naturally, these "confidential" copies were promptly communicated not only to the Devolutionists but to the Castle's political backers, who saw that the Lord, or rather their own well-devised system of espionage, had delivered the Government, as well as Sir Antony MacDonnell, into their hands. Attacked from within by Sir Edward Carson (who

held office as Solicitor-General for England) and from without by the leagued cohorts of reaction in politics and the Press, the Ministry surrendered at discretion. Mr. Wyndham was compelled to resign the Chief Secretaryship; and though the Viceroy (Lord Dudley) and Sir Antony MacDonnell retained their posts, they were placed strictly under the thumb of Mr. Walter Long who, with Sir Edward Carson as keeper of his conscience, was under bonds to give short shrift to such pestilent heresies as "Government according to Irish ideas." Once again, and more conclusively than ever, the Castle revealed its power to defeat any scheme of moderate reform, whether it was initiated by Irish Unionists or British Ministers, and demonstrated to all who retained a sense of reality in Irish politics that the only right line of action is to end once for all what T. M. Kettle described as " a bureaucracy which has usurped the throne of a nation."

Since O'Connell provided the majority which enabled Lord Grey to carry the first Reform Bill, Tories on both sides of the Channel have raged furiously against " Irish dictation in English affairs." So passionate have been their protests that the average British voter is inclined to accept them at their face value, and with delightful illogicality fails as a rule to see that, having given Ireland nominally equally rights under the Union, he has no possible ground of complaint if she uses these rights to prevent him managing his business in his own way, as he consistently employs his infinitely greater powers to dictate to her what she must do and what she must leave undone.

English wrath has been invariably directed against Nationalists, who make no concealment of their resolve to thrust a spoke into the wheels of the parliamentary machine in order to demonstrate, as Parnell used to put it, that "if Englishmen will not allow us to govern ourselves, we will do our best to make it difficult for them to govern themselves." This no doubt may be very reprehensible from the English point of view; and Unionists, who ignore everything else that Grattan said, insist it was a prophetic vision of the Nationalist Party under Parnell that inspired the great opponent of the Union to declare: "You have swept away our Constitution; you have destroyed our parliament, but we shall have our revenge. We will send into the ranks of your parliament and into the heart of your Constitution a hundred of the greatest rascals in the kingdom."

Grattan, it is plain, was thinking less of what might happen in the dim and distant future than of what was actually happening under his eyes. Instead of being dominated by a compact English majority, as had been prophesied during the Union debates, the Irish reactionaries found in the British Parliament a wider field wherein to exercise their peculiar talents. They rallied as a matter of course to reactionary Toryism; and though their original object may have been to prevent changes in Ireland dangerous to their supremacy, they speedily discovered that the most effective way of preventing such changes was to fight tooth and nail against every reform demanded by the British people in their own interests.

In an incredibly short time Westminster, far from controlling, was controlled by a group of politicians trained in the narrowest traditions of Irish Ascendancy. It seems to have escaped the attention of English commentators that the methods which in the years that followed Waterloo made the names of Castlereagh and Wellington an abomination to the overwhelming mass of the British people were precisely the methods by which they and their fellow landlords asserted and maintained their territorial and political domination in Ireland. The Union instead of anglicising Irish administration, tended to reproduce in England some of the most hateful features of Castle rule. It is difficult for Irishmen at least to regard this development as other than a well-merited judgment upon so-called progressives who flattered themselves they had scotched a danger when they destroyed the Irish Legislature, and were unable or unwilling to realise how disastrously its destruction reacted on their own liberties.

In Raikes's *Diary* we are told that after signing the proclamation prohibiting O'Connell's meeting at Clontarf, the Duke of Wellington went into dinner cheerfully humming the couplet

"Pour la canaille
Faut la mitraille."

Not a few democratic Englishmen hailed this application of "blood and iron" methods to Ireland as a master-stroke of statecraft. But when Wellington, who had at least the merit of being logical, proposed to treat English parliamentary reformers,

and did treat the Chartists, to a dose of the same medicine, these democrats made the heavens ring with their denunciations of militarist tyranny. Apparently it never struck them that one thing was the complement of the other, or that ministers, who had a free hand to exercise autocratic powers on the Irish side of the Channel, would not be content to limit themselves to constitutional weapons in order to overbear English opposition.

The evil did not cease with the generation of statesmen upon whose shoulders the mantle of Clare had fallen. On the contrary, these men established a tradition which at every critical juncture in English domestic affairs has strengthened the hands of those who clamoured for methods of force to repel the democratic invasion. For over a century Irish Unionism has supplied English reaction with its most competent and thorough-going leaders and its most devoted shock-troops. They were foremost in the fight against the enfranchisement of the middle classes in the first generation of the nineteenth century, as they have been foremost in the fight against the efforts of Labour to assert its political power in the first generation of the twentieth century. Their tactics, indeed, have not met with the same measure of success in both countries. England at the worst has been beaten with whips; Ireland has been chastised with scorpions. To do them justice, the reactionaries were fully prepared to deal out equal treatment to both nations, and it is not their fault if in Great Britain circumstances up to the present

have proved too strong for them. Yet they have by no means abandoned the attempt as hopeless, and discredited as Irish autocracy may be in the eyes of the world it still exercises a potent fascination over English bureaucrats.

It is not merely an accident that Mr. Shortt, who as Chief Secretary sponsored the "German Plot" to defeat the anti-conscription campaign in Ireland, should, as Home Secretary, produce a Bolshevik Plot faithfully modelled on the same pattern as an ideal device for discrediting English trade unionism. The creation of a department of political police under the wing of the Home Office has been indignantly denounced by Liberalism and Labour as a return to the policy of Sidmouth and Eldon. Mr. Shortt, I am certain, did not waste time in hunting up century-old precedents upon which to base his new departure. He adopted the simpler and more satisfactory course of duplicating in Whitehall part of the machinery which, as Chief Secretary, he learned to manipulate in Dublin Castle.

That it is possible for one democracy to govern another against its will is proved by the history of Ireland since the Union. But it is possible only on condition that the agents of the ruling race are empowered to use the weapons of autocracy to enforce obedience and compel submission. The appetite for exercising uncontrolled authority grows, however, by what it feeds on; and politicians who impose their will upon Ireland by the simple devices of ukases and martial law are irresistibly tempted, when confronted with similar

problems in Great Britain, to meet them with the same methods. A study of the reactions of Dublin Castle upon Downing Street inside the last generation would convince, I strongly hold, any doubting Thomases who may still exist amongst the British electorate that whether the concession of self-government can be justified or not as an act of justice to Ireland, it is imperatively needed to ensure fair play for the English democracy.

Islington Public Libraries.

Chapter IV.

O'CONNELL AND THE OLIGARCHS.

The men who had led the fight to save Irish legislative independence, abandoned effective resistance once Ascendancy had entrenched itself behind the ramparts of the Union. Grattan, according to Lord Cloncurry, advised Irishmen "to keep knocking at the Union"; but in his reply to a resolution passed by the Grand Jury of Dublin in 1810, which stated that the Union "instead of cementing, if not repealed, might endanger the connection between the sister countries," he made clear that his opposition would be at the best academic. In practice, he was less concerned to nullify the Union than, in his own phrase, "to make it fertile," and he insisted that any repeal proposal "to be either prudent or possible, must wait until it should be called for and backed by the nation." Grattan was probably the most advanced member of his class; and even those who had used still stronger language against Pitt's scheme, accepted it not only as an accomplished fact but almost as if it were a law of nature embodied in an Act of Parliament. From this time onwards, with rare if striking exceptions, the Irish aristocracy abandoned any claim that it had formerly possessed

to speak for Ireland, and fought openly and without shame for the privileges of a class as against the rights of a people.

A similar tendency revealed itself amongst that section of the population which in the last decades of the eighteenth century was assumed by friend and foe to stand for Irish democracy. After '98, Ulster Republicanism no longer counted in any real sense as a political force. The failure of the United Irishmen to evolve a practicable plan of combined action or to secure effective aid from France, together with the rigours of martial law and the devastating vengeance that followed the suppression of the Rebellion, had done much, if not to convert, at least to disillusion, the Ulster reformers. Divisions in the ranks were widened by the skilful, though utterly unscrupulous, exploitation of sectarian prejudices, and by assurances that the Union, whatever it might mean for the Catholics, gave the Northern Dissenters all and more than they had demanded. Of all the money expended by the British Government at this period in Ireland, none brought in a richer return than the sum devoted to increasing the *Regium Donum* grants, with the object, as the Government admitted in private, of making the Presbyterian ministry "a subordinate ecclesiastical aristocracy, whose feeling must be that of zealous loyalty." Castlereagh, who had been brought up in the Presbyterian tradition, knew its weakness as well as its strength. In theory, its demand was for equality of creeds, but by playing on its deepest

prejudices, he calculated it was possible to persuade its members that the grant of special privileges denied to Catholics was at least a substitute for equality with the Establishment. In return for these privileges the Executive obtained a practical veto on the appointment of ministers to Presbyterian congregations, and adroit handling of this lever served more than anything else to range Ulster Protestantism on the side of reaction and vested interests.

An attempt was made about the same time to enlist the Catholic Church on the side of the Government, though, characteristically enough, Dublin Castle expected the Irish Hierarchy to surrender its independence without even the lure of a mess of pottage. It was assumed that the higher clergy and the Catholic gentry were so wedded to the principle of authority and the maintenance of the existing social order that they would be willing to give British Ministers a controlling voice in the appointments to vacant Sees in Ireland. The plot, which had a large measure of support from the Vatican, would in all probability have succeeded, had not Daniel O'Connell scored his first great triumph in public life by marshalling against it the opposition of the Catholic democracy. It was in the course of this controversy that O'Connell made the historic announcement, "I would as soon receive my politics from Constantinople as from Rome"; and, speaking from the altar of Clarendon Street chapel, he declared, amidst tumultuous applause: "If the present clergy shall descend from the high station they hold to become the vile

slaves of the clerks of the Castle—a thing I believe impossible—but should it occur, I warn them in time to look to their masters for their support, for the people will despise them too much to contribute." "Catholics," he continued, "in such a contingency would communicate only with some holy priest who never bowed to the Dagon of power, and the Castle clergy would preach to still thinner numbers than attend in Munster or in Connacht the reverend gentlemen of the present Established Church."

O'Connell's plain speaking scandalised the timid, and infuriated the respectables to such a degree that the Catholic Board was rent in twain. Not only, however, were the Veto proposals dropped, but O'Connell gave to the Irish masses a new consciousness of their political strength, and broke at a blow the old and evil tradition that the only class that counted in Catholic as well as Protestant Ireland was the aristocracy.

Throughout the greater part of his life O'Connell was in the eyes of the Irish people above and beyond criticism. Sharp as were the controversies of his last years the champions of Young Ireland did not materially diminish his prestige in the eyes of his contemporaries. Since his death the tide of reaction has set hard against him, and it is scarcely an exaggeration to say that twentieth century Ireland would more readily accept an apologia for Castlereagh than a panegyric of the Liberator. This is due, I believe, less to the defects of O'Connell's policy than to the fact that popular Irish political literature is the work of men who were

his open opponents. The Young Irelanders were not consciously unfair to the leader of Old Ireland; on the contrary their criticisms, however bitter and barbed, rarely fail to do justice to the greatness of the man. But it was inevitable under the circumstances that they should judge O'Connell not by what he had done but by what they believed he had it in his power to do. While no politician can fairly complain of the application of this test so long as he insists on controlling active operations in the field, he may fairly ask that posterity shall take a broader and less biassed view. It is perhaps an unconscious tribute to the dynamic force of O'Connell that his critics contend, and his champions scarcely deny, that he could have succeeded where not only the Irish leaders of his own age but of all successive generations have failed. It is less profitable, in my opinion, to chop useless logic about "might have beens" than to discover, if possible, what O'Connell aimed at, and how far he came towards achieving his purpose.

In essentials, O'Connell's political philosophy was simplicity itself. It was summed up in the cry "Repeal the Union." In his long career O'Connell, it is true, seemed to pursue courses that led anywhere except towards his goal, but he never wavered in his conviction that this and nothing else was the one effective cure for Irish ills. A politician absorbed in dealing with actual necessities as they arose, he concerned himself little with theories as to how Repeal, if he had effected it, would have worked in practice. Such things he left to abstract thinkers; his business, as he saw it,

was to devise the means of shaping the existing situation to his own ends.

In one of his speeches on the Veto he detailed the main article of his political faith. "The Protestant," he said, "cannot liberate his country; the Roman Catholic cannot do it; neither can the Presbyterian. But amalgamate the three into the Irishman, and the Union is repealed." O'Connell's special task was to prepare his co-religionists to play their part in such an amalgamation. So thoroughly did he do his work that the Irish Catholics, whom Swift had described as being "without leaders, without discipline, without natural courage, little better than hewers of wood and drawers of water," whom Grattan and his fellow reformers had assumed must always be kept in Protestant leading strings, were fashioned inside a few years into the most formidable weapon that had up till then been devised by any leader for use in the political arena. Not only did O'Connell invent a method of agitation without precedent in his own age, he set up a model which all leaders of popular movements since his day have faithfully imitated.

So complete was his success that his admirers, as well as his critics, have rarely done adequate justice to the novelty of the new departure, or to the statesmanlike genius that triumphed over all obstacles. Undoubtedly, his work was simplified by the readiness and dexterity with which the Irish masses grasped the principles of political organisation, and by their willingness to submit to a strong and masterful discipline at the hands of a leader who

had won their trust. But it was O'Connell who divined these latent possibilities in the Irish people, and found the means of giving full effect to them. He laid the foundation upon which all his successors have built, and if the structure he designed was superseded by other and better plans it is owing to his spade-work that these plans were practicable.

O'Connell has been condemned by both dominant parties in modern Irish politics for subordinating the national claim to a purely sectarian demand. But in his view the amalgamation which he desired could come only as a result of Catholic equality with other religions. To achieve this equality and to use it as a stepping-stone to greater things constituted the pith of O'Connell's policy. As a matter of fact the Emancipation crusade did not intensify religious prejudices. No cause advocated by Irish Nationalists since the Union received as large a measure of Protestant support, and O'Connell had solid grounds for thinking that the barriers which had so long prevented a union of Irishmen were at last beginning to give. That they held in spite of O'Connell was due not to the demands of Catholics as Catholics but to the demands of Catholics as democrats.

In the Waterford election of 1826, which was the turning point in the Emancipation struggle, Lord George Beresford's attitude to the tenants, who voted in accordance with their own wishes and not as their landlords decreed, has been described as an "exhibition of good-humoured insolence, as

of a man half-angry with a horse suddenly grown restive." When it was discovered that the horse was determined to submit no more to the rider, good-humoured insolence gave way to a fury of hate that stuck at nothing to obtain its revenge.

Parliament might be coerced into passing Acts that relieved Catholics of their disabilities, but Dublin Castle, not for the first or last time, defied Parliament and popular opinion alike to compel it to execute them. "In 1833—four years after Catholic Emancipation—there was not in Ireland," so Lecky writes, "a single Catholic judge or stipendiary magistrate. All the high sheriffs, with one exception, the overwhelming majority of the unpaid magistrates and of the grand jurors, the five inspectors-general, and the thirty-two sub-inspectors of police were Protestant. The chief towns were in the hands of narrow, corrupt, and, for the most part, intensely bigoted corporations. . . . For many years promotion had been steadily withheld from those who advocated Catholic Emancipation, and the majority of the people thus found their bitterest enemies in the foremost places."

Deprivation of place and power was not the worst that Catholics had to face. Eviction notices rained on tenants who had voted against the Ascendancy policy, and men, women, and children were flung out to starve on the roadside by landlords in whom the prejudices of caste had submerged every instinct of compassion and humanity. "We have daily in our view," wrote an Irish tenant to Lord

Althorp at this period, "death staring us in the face in the shape of poverty, hunger, and starvation. Under these circumstances, and surrounded by martial law, there is no alternative left but to choose the easiest way to die."

English Ministers, who were accustomed to fire the indignation of parliament by dilating on the grim statistics of Irish agrarian crime, had no word of criticism, much less of condemnation, for a system of land tenure under which, as the Poor Law Inquiry of 1835 reported, 2,235,000 people were out of work and in distress for thirty weeks in the year, while the great mass of those who were nominally in employment were compelled to maintain existence as best they could on a diet of potatoes and water. To take steps to improve such a state of affairs would have been to infringe the sacred laws of political economy, and prevent the free operation of supply and demand, though, as even so doctrinaire an economist as Nassau Senior confessed, the treaty between landlord and tenant in Ireland was not a calm bargain, but "a struggle like the struggle to buy bread in a besieged town, or to buy water in an African caravan."

O'Connell's schemes to ameliorate the conditions of the people outraged the Ascendancy even more than his demand for Repeal. In spite of their protests of devoted loyalty to England, their real objection was not to the principle of Irish self-government. Had they believed it possible to retain untouched their territorial and sectarian privileges, and exercise at the same time political domina-

tion untrammelled by English Acts of Parliament, they would have been as enthusiastic champions of independence as were their eighteenth-century ancestors. But they realized that any change in the constitution must mean a diminution of their powers, and the greater O'Connell's success in arousing the political consciousness of the Irish masses, the firmer became the resolve of the classes to maintain the existing system as the only effective bulwark of their privileges.

One can understand, even if one does not applaud, this attitude on the part of men whose test of patriotism was respect for the rights of property. It is more difficult to understand why England, if her sole object were to maintain her grip on Ireland, should have preferred to make her bargain with the minority and not with the majority. O'Connell, in theory, asserted Ireland's right to independence; in practice, like all the nineteenth-century parliamentarian leaders, he would have accepted a compromise which gave him even formal autonomy. Indeed he was willing to demonstrate that he demanded self-government only because justice to Ireland could not be obtained under the Union system.

If, strategically and tactically, his support of the Melbourne Administration was perhaps the gravest political blunder of O'Connell's career, at least it furnishes an unanswerable reply to the people who argued then, and to the remnant who argue now, that the Union would have obliterated every injustice and satisfied every reasonable

demand had Irishmen abandoned barren opposition for frank co-operation. From 1835 to 1838 O'Connell gave the experiment of co-operation a fair trial, and though it is customary to attribute his support of the Melbourne Ministry to a mercenary desire to control Government "patronage" in Ireland, it is, I believe, more in keeping with the character of the man to assume that his dominant motive was, as throughout his career, to convince his countrymen of other creeds that Irish Catholics aimed at equality not ascendancy, and would work any system which held out a hope of fair treatment.

O'Connell defined his position in the clearest possible terms in a speech delivered in Dublin in 1836. "I own," he said, "that one of the fondest dreams of my earliest youth was the nationality of Ireland. I never gave up the fondling of that hope for a moment; but at the same time I have determined that there shall be a full experiment of a general and central government, and that, before we seek to be governed by ourselves, it shall be proved to demonstration that the English Government and Parliament cannot confer all the advantages to which we are entitled." "Your Union," he informed the House of Commons later, "is one of parchment, and it may be one of adamant; but the latter it will not be unless you do justice to Ireland." "I am making," he added, "an experiment amongst you, and frankly and fairly I tell you, I am convinced you will not do us justice."

O'Connell's conviction was justified up to the hilt. He was rigidly moderate in the demands he put forward; to-day even Sir Edward Carson would not dispute that O'Connell was in the right and his opponents in the wrong on the two questions of Tithes and Municipal Reform which he made the touchstone of the sincerity of English declarations that the Union was designed to benefit Ireland no less than Great Britain. But O'Connell's claim for equality of rights, laws, and liberties between the two nations outraged the English Tories even more than the dominant caste in Ireland. Never in his stormy career was he more fiercely assailed than while he was risking his prestige with his own countrymen to do the work of English Ministers for them, by striving to modify the defects that had made the Union, as Lord Charlemont prophesied, "more than any other measure contribute to the separation of the two countries."

Lord Grey, whose Reform Bill would have been defeated had not O'Connell thrown his strength on the side of English democracy, denounced the politician to whom he owed so much as "a man whose conduct has been, beyond any example except that of the worst men at the beginning of the French Revolution, unprincipled and brutal," though the lack of principle and the brutality consisted in asking for concessions which if granted would have been to the interest of Great Britain even more than of Ireland. "Rancorous ruffian," "unredeemed and unredeemable scoundrel," "loquacious

mendicant," "a wretch who lies more foully than it could have entered into the imagination of the devil himself to lie," were the commonest epithets in the speeches and writings of his opponents. The *Times*, which O'Connell said was like a misplaced milestone in that it could not possibly tell the truth, took its revenge by pillorying him in abusive verse of which the following lines are an example:

"Scum condensed of Irish bog!
Ruffian, coward, demagogue!
Boundless liar, base detractor!
Nurse of murders, treason's factor!
Of Pope and priest the crouching slave
While thy lips of freedom rave.
Of England's fame the viprous hater,
Yet wanting courage for a traitor."

O'Connell, I need not say, gave as good as he got at this game. "Shin o' Beef" was his nickname for an unfortunate Viceroy who had a reputation for stinginess; Stanley became "Scorpion" Stanley; and if Peel could afford to ignore the obviousness of the appellation "Orange" Peel, the comparison of his icy smile to the glint of a silver plate on a coffin was a thrust which he was wholly unable to parry.

It is the fashion, even in Ireland, to express regret, if not actual horror, that O'Connell failed to cultivate on the platform the amenities of the drawing-room. The difference, however, between him and his opponents was not that they were more

polite, but that his abuse was sufficiently witty to make it live in the popular mind. Perhaps it is deplorable that a Titan who could forge thunderbolts should have descended to fling mud. But O'Connell, fated to wrestle single-handed with beasts at Ephesus, ought not to be criticised too severely for turning the weapons of his opponents against themselves, and there is this to be said for his mud, it was thrown with so good an aim that most of it still sticks.

The violence of O'Connell has passed into a legend. To the Irish aristocracy in particular he was a portent as dreadful as Danton was to the nobles of the old *régime*, the declared enemy of Church and State who, by some magic unknown to them, had transformed a mob of half-starved and wholly humble serfs into a horde of ravening destroyers. "I fear," wrote a woman as shrewd as Maria Edgeworth, "our throats will be cut by O'Connell and Co. very soon." Yet O'Connell, at the time this sentiment was uttered, was risking his political position in the hope that English statesmen would demonstrate their ability to treat Ireland with common fairness, and broke at last with the strongest section of his followers because they declined to accept his contention that no political reform was worth the shedding of blood.

O'Connell kept faithfully his side of the compact with the Melbourne Ministry, and did his best for a long time to excuse their shortcomings on the ground that the efforts of the Whig majority in the Commons were frustrated, as for generations

such efforts were destined to be frustrated, by the Tory forces in the Upper House. The Cabinet, on its part, did little to help O'Connell and showed itself more anxious to placate the Peers than to meet the legitimate claims of the Irish people. On the tithe question the measure finally passed by the Whigs in 1838 was in all essential principles that which they had rejected as wholly inadequate when proposed by Peel in 1835. By transforming the tithes into a charge on rent, the Commutation Act ended the practice of ministers of the Gospel heading raids of armed soldiery to levy forced contributions—a practice which Protestants of that era had apparently no difficulty in reconciling with the precepts of the Sermon on the Mount—but it left behind it a rankling sense of injustice which nothing was done to remove until the church was disestablished thirty years later.

O'Connell's demand for equality of treatment in the matter of municipal rights was even more contemptuously rejected. The Tories, who had maintained for generations that the safety of Church and State depended upon keeping the municipal corporations Ascendancy preserves in which 13,000 Protestants exercised autocratic control over 900,000 Catholics, were forced to admit that the condition of affairs could no longer be maintained. Their remedy, however, was not, as had been done in England and Scotland, to get rid of the evils that deformed the system, but to extinguish the corporations. O'Connell succinctly described Peel's plan as a proposal to suffer no civil rights

to appertain to any of the inhabitants of Ireland because Protestants could no longer monopolise privileges and rights intended for the whole of the people. Outrageous as it seems, Peel, by using the Peers to reject the Whig Bills time after time, was able in the long run to force Melbourne to adopt a measure which, instead of being a charter of municipal freedom, "virtually amounted," in the judgment of so good a constitutional expert as Sir Erskine May, "to a scheme of municipal disfranchisement."

Gavan Duffy's summary of the so-called Municipal Reform Act is as accurate as it is pungent. "There were," he writes, "sixty-eight elected corporations in the hands of the Protestant minority, and with respect to fifty-eight of them, the new law stripped them of their privileges and their property—where any property had escaped—plundered and extinguished them, rather than let them fall into the hands of the majority of the nation. In the English Act, on the other hand, every chartered town had been preserved. The ten corporations which were not destroyed were effectually maimed." Yet the Bishop of Exeter entered a solemn protest in the Journals of the Lords, not against the scandalous injustice to the mass of the Irish people, but "because by this deliberate abandonment of the cause of true religion . . . we have provoked the justice of Almighty God, and have given too much reason to apprehend the visitation of Divine vengeance for this presumptuous act of national disobedience."

Had a Catholic prelate insisted that the cause of true religion was bound up with the maintenance of a system of open corruption and unashamed jobbery, which no Catholic statesman dared to defend on its merits, how conclusively such an admission would have demonstrated to Protestant minds the decadence and degradation of Catholicism!

O'Connell could claim that by his compact with the Melbourne Ministry he had justified the demand for self-government, not only in the light of the conditions prescribed by him, but of those laid down by his opponents. "If," said "Scorpion" Stanley during his term of office as Chief Secretary, "they wish to give Ireland a real, solid, substantial grievance—if they wish to give some handle to excitement, and to present a solid argument for the Repeal of the Union—they need only show that in the British House of Commons English interests are treated in one way, and Irish interests in another." Neither Stanley nor Peel could deny that the fate of Municipal Reform and of the Tithe proposals proved that Irish interests were regarded as directly in conflict with English interests; and Lord Lyndhurst, the Tory Chancellor, urged the Upper House to reject the Corporations Bill on the specific ground that under it "we Protestant Englishmen are to be governed by those who are aliens in blood, in language, in religion."

Logically O'Connell proved his case, but in the relations between subject races and their overlords,

logic and justice counted for as little eighty years ago as they do to-day. When the Liberator, dropping the hopeless task of inducing Parliament to deal fairly as between the two countries, set himself to band his countrymen in a united demand for Repeal, he was destined to learn that agitation within the four corners of the law was, in Ireland at least, no less a crime than agitation which relied in the last resort on the argument of pike and musket. Though O'Connell kept the letter of the law, his opponents by flagrantly and openly breaking it won the game. The doctrine that reforms could be gained by moral force alone survived Clontarf, and for years afterwards served to divide Irishmen into hostile camps and frustrate their efforts, but, as a practical policy, it was blown to pieces by the guns which at the orders of Wellington and Peel were trained upon Brian Boroimhe's old battlefield, even though their gunners were never called upon to fire a shot.

In Ireland to-day it is assumed that O'Connell by his insistence on a metaphysical proposition which the whole facts of history disproved flung away the hope of achieving freedom. I do not deny that strong arguments can be advanced in support of this contention, but in my opinion it perverts the facts. Undoubtedly, O'Connell talked as if the mere refusal to employ physical force would in itself accomplish political miracles, and was guilty of the wildest extravagance of speech against those who refused to accept his doctrine as a fundamental axiom of statesmanship. Though

it would not be difficult to show from his speeches that this non-resistance theory, especially in his later years, summed up for him the Law and the Prophets, on a broader view, I hold, that it expressed the negative and not the positive side of his faith. His demand, like that of the eighteenth century reformers, was for the unity of all Irishmen; and had this been attained his theory of the irresistible strength of moral force might have been tested with some hope of success.

It will be urged, I am aware, that O'Connell's failure to achieve unity intensifies his responsibility, not merely for discarding a weapon upon which all subject races have relied, but for prohibiting in advance any other leader from using it. On this ground he cannot hope to escape censure, though it may be pleaded in extenuation that had the basis of his agitation not been so undeniably pacific the organisation which carried Catholic Emancipation, and only failed to carry Repeal, would have been smashed by force twenty years before Clontarf.

O'Connell knew only too well that his people were no match for the armed strength that their rulers could array against them, and he had too vivid a recollection of the consequences of failure in such a struggle to contemplate it even as a forlorn hope. As the generation that followed him grew up under the shadow of Clontarf, so O'Connell, it is often forgotten, grew up under the shadow of '98, with as its dominant memory not the battles in the open in which modern Ireland

exults, but the hangings, floggings, and house-burnings which broke the spirit of the Irish peasantry for the best part of a generation. His language about the leaders of '98 was inexcusable, and remains a dark blot on his reputation. But he denounced them less because they drew the sword than because they drew it without reckoning, as he asserted, what would and did befall the multitudes who rallied to their banner. Those who argue, as did the Young Irelanders, that O'Connell was a *grand homme manqué* because the mantle of Wolfe Tone had not fallen upon his shoulders, overlook the fact that had he developed as they desired he could not have done the work which it was his special province to do.

O'Connell was essentially a moderate who believed that it was possible by a new grouping of forces inside the nation to restore the position as it was before the Union, with this difference, that the Irish Parliament, instead of being the preserve of a privileged class, would have behind it the support of the whole people. Though he preached the creed of democracy in language that his opponents denounced as rank blasphemy, he insisted that democracy could be reconciled with the idea of a social hierarchy, and the vast majority of latter-day Conservatives would dismiss many of O'Connell's pet theories as ridiculously reactionary. Had he been given the opportunity he desired he would have aimed less at root and branch reforms than at a gradual process of levelling up.

The truest conception of O'Connell is not as a politician of the orthodox nineteenth century type, but as a glorified tribal chief with all Ireland for his clan, who believed it was possible to substitute human relations between different grades in the social order for the cash nexus abhorred of Carlyle. His speeches and writings show that he had the keenest sense of the dangers produced by the abnormalities of the Irish economic situation, and time and again he framed proposals which, though they might not have averted the catastrophe that blighted the last days of his life, would have avoided its worst horrors.

O'Connell's defect was that he assumed political remedies could be secured and applied in time to stave off economic disaster. But this defect was by no means peculiar to him. The Young Irelanders held to it quite as firmly, the only difference being that for the lever of moral persuasion they sought to substitute the spear-point of physical force. In the cataclysm of the Famine one weapon proved as useless as the other; and the Ascendancy found it even less trouble to stamp out the half-hearted Young Ireland Rising of '48 than to crush O'Connell's Repeal agitation. Fintan Lalor alone discerned that the hope of the future lay in using economic weapons for political ends; and though his voice was almost unheeded in the furious and futile controversies that rent the Ireland of his day, the seed planted by him was destined inside a generation to provide the democracy which O'Connell had roused into consciousness, and to

which the Young Irelanders had given a soul, with the means of meeting its oppressors for the first time on something like equal terms.

In some quarters it is held to be a sufficient refutation of O'Connell's title to fame that he believed in evolution rather than revolution, that in an age of Ricardian economics he failed to anticipate the theories of Karl Marx, that he said hard things about trade unionism, and was a landlord as well as a Repealer. These charges are true, but they mean little more than that O'Connell was, as all save a few inspired seers have been, a man of his own time. His true claim to greatness lay in his power to divine its special needs and in the skill with which he devised out of the materials at his command a practical policy to meet those needs.

Lecky, who could not decide whether O'Connell's life "was a blessing or a curse to Ireland," has on this subject done him more justice than the majority of his panegyrists. It was, he points out, one of O'Connell's "deepest convictions that democracy was the future of the world, and that it was in the interest and in the power of the Church fully to accept its conditions and to mould it by its influence." Now that the battle of democracy has been won, in theory at least, O'Connell's discovery may appear, as such discoveries have a knack of doing to succeeding generations, an obvious commonplace. When he first proclaimed his creed, however, it was universally regarded as a fantastic, if not a blasphemous,

paradox. Democrat at that period was a name of as evil odour as Bolshevik is to the modern profiteer. The very word curdled the blood of respectability with horrid visions of the death tumbrils rolling through the streets, and the blade of the guillotine clanking down upon aristocratic necks.

Nineteenth century democracy was the child of the French Revolution, and to the Catholic Church, in particular, the Revolution and all its works were anathema. The men who smashed the bases of the old order in France waged war no less strenuously against Popes than against Kings. Catholicism, as they saw it, was the cement that held together the fabric they were determined to destroy, and they prided themselves that in their crusade against religion they were fulfilling the spirit and the letter of Voltaire's command *Ecrasez l'Infâme*. The counter-revolution was prepared and directed by great Catholic apologists like Joseph de Maistre; and after Waterloo, the kings who, in Mrs. Browning's phrase, "crept out again to feel the sun," looked, and not in vain, to the authority of the Church to reinforce their power in the State.

O'Connell was as violently opposed to the French upheaval as Joseph de Maistre or Burke. As a student at Douay he had witnessed its developments at first hand; and when, after a series of narrow escapes, he got safely out of Calais, the gesture of hatred and contempt with which he tore the tricolour badge from his hat and trampled it under foot was typical of his life-long attitude to-

wards the Revolution and its makers. Yet O'Connell, who would have found Tennyson's phrase about "the red fool fury of the Seine" altogether too mild, succeeded where men like Lammenais and Lacordaire had failed in establishing an *entente* between the democratic ideal quickened into life by Jacobinism and the Catholic ideal to which Jacobinism was one of the seven deadly sins.

"The spirit of democracy," O'Connell insisted, "is more favourable to the cause of morality and religion than the monarchial spirit"; and he declared that the democratic system of Catholic worship, and the organisation of a priesthood which threw open to all its members the highest posts, eminently fitted Catholicism to be the guide of the newly enfranchised nations. Nowhere, says Lecky, did the Liberal school of Continental Catholics "find their ideal so fully realised as in O'Connell—the Liberator of his co-religionists—the unflinching advocate of liberty in all its forms, a Catholic of the most severe and fervent orthodoxy, acting in all his policy in the closest union with an unpaid and independent priesthood, and at the same time swaying with unrivalled power the democracy of his country."

Parnell's achievement in harnessing Home Rule to the Land Question was easier to accomplish, and produced less memorable results, than O'Connell's success in linking the forces of Catholicism with those of democracy. "O'Connell and the priests," wrote an English Lord Chancellor at the crisis of the Repeal movement, "have ranged the lower

orders against the intelligence and property of the country." Up to then English statesmen had believed, and events from the Penal days onward went far to confirm their belief, that while denying Irishmen equality on the ground of their Catholicism, it was always possible to modify, if not wholly to prevent, a popular upheaval against authority by enlisting on the side of authority the influence of the Catholic Church. O'Connell's real offence in the eyes of the Ascendancy was not, as its champions proclaimed on a thousand platforms, that he sacrificed the laity to strengthen the priesthood, but that he knit Church and people into a new unity to secure a popular demand.

While Protestant controversialists were wringing their hands over the lamentable spectacle, as they described it, of Irish Catholics under the spell of O'Connell sinking deeper and deeper into the abyss of superstition and obscurantism, an acute French observer, Duvergier, who had no political or sectarian axe to grind, was pointing out to his countrymen that in Ireland Catholicism and Protestantism seemed to have changed places. "Protestants," he said, "were dogmatic and intolerant; Catholics had suddenly become almost philosophical."

Chapter V.

THE NEW REFORMATION.

Had Irish Unionists possessed even a tincture of statesmanship Catholic Emancipation, long as it had been delayed and grudgingly as it was at last conceded, might have served as a basis to establish new relations between the creeds. Unfortunately for Ireland no less than for themselves, they, as always, resolved that no consideration of prudence would tempt them to abate one jot or tittle of their prejudices. Their point of view was admirably expressed by the Bishop of London in a speech in the House of Lords in 1844 opposing the repeal of obsolete penal enactments affecting English Catholics. "From the time of the Reformation," declared this enlightened prelate, "the constitution of this country has been not only a Protestant, but an anti-Popish constitution . . . and this is the first instance, except the Act of Emancipation, of the legislature proposing to break down the Acts which were framed for the protection of the Protestant Constitution. Many of these Acts have been passed rather under the influence of panic than of legislative wisdom; but they all formed links of that chain on which the Protestant Constitution depended."

I have described in a previous chapter the precautions which were taken to render the Emancipation Act a dead letter by rigidly excluding Catholics from place and power. But not satisfied with passive resistance the Ascendancy decided to carry the war into the enemy's country by a vigorous proselytising campaign. With incredible fatuity it persuaded itself that a judicious combination of doles and tracts would suffice to overthrow the political power of the priests, and at the same time strike a blow for true religion by shepherding the Irish peasantry into the Protestant fold. That a Church which had survived the Penal Laws should succumb to soup-kitchens was taken for granted by the divines who inaugurated the crusade. If some of their backers were wiser these felt they were getting value for their subscriptions by demonstrating that if priests interfered in politics, Protestants could retaliate by making mischief between priests and their flocks. The increased activity of these missions and proselytising agencies after the passing of Catholic Emancipation is set down by most historians to a new wave of Protestant enthusiasm, but I am convinced that, whatever the motives of its authors may have been, the support they received was given largely for political reasons.

The Evangelists themselves were always eager to prove that their efforts to secure converts would produce political results which politicians who relied on the secular arm could never hope to attain. Dr. Dill, missionary agent to the Irish

Presbyterian Church, sets this view in the forefront of his book, *The Mystery Solved*, perhaps the most amazing piece of literature which the crusade produced. According to this authority, statesmen, economists, and social reformers were all groping in blind alleys; the simple solution of Ireland's difficulties was to extirpate Catholicism. "Venture the supposition," Dr. Dill writes, "that Romanism is false and Protestantism true, and like some dissected map the most shapeless part of Ireland's puzzle falls into its place in a moment. Observe how it unfolds every mystery in our physical and moral state; and explains why the 'Black North' is a garden, and the 'Sunny South' a wilderness; why southern jails are crowded and northern ones half empty, and why the southern, with naturally the finest parts, is yet so degraded. Mark how it solves our political enigmas; shows why Ulster flourishes and Munster declines beneath the same laws; and not only explains why the country grows worse as her legislation grows better, but demonstrates that it must be so, if our rulers have at the same time been encouraging Rome."

Dr. Dill's eagle eye discovers the blighting influences of Popery not only in the moral but the physical world. "The very body," he says, "feels its curse—you see the 'mark of the Beast' not only on the forehead but the frame." Even Irish weather is tainted by Vatican policy. "If to Popery," he explains in an exquisite passage, "we are indebted for undrained bogs and filthy

cabins; then it is it we must chiefly thank for that damp which is the result of one and those diseases which are caused by both. If then, Popery injures even our salubrious clime, what report can we expect from other lands? Instance Italy, 'the seat of the Beast,' and in the days of the Cæsars, towns and villages stood where the Pontine marshes now send up their poisonous vapours, and that malaria was but slightly felt which is now the scourge of the land."

When arguments of this kind were seriously advanced by presumably learned divines, one can understand the spirit that inspired the rank and file of the missionaries. They may have believed that they were authorised to turn Catholic darkness into Protestant light, but this belief was scarcely a warrant for making a bonfire not only of the religious but of the civic rights of members of a different creed. Landlords aided and abetted the preachers by using their power of eviction to compel tenants to send their children to proselytising schools; and with refined cruelty hungry Catholic pupils, who attended the Lancastrian National Schools, Belfast, were compelled to assist at Protestant religious exercises or else go without their breakfasts. Lord Plunkett, the Bishop of Tuam, organised raids on Catholic houses on his estate. His agents pulled the children from under the beds where they had been hidden by their parents, and carried them by main force to school so that the truths of Protestantism might be dinned into their unwilling ears. Where tenants proved

obdurate, the simple remedy was to drive them out. The *Times* in those days rarely questioned the divine right of landlords, but even it drew the line at Bishop Plunkett. "We are sorry to say," it wrote, "that the evictions of his tenantry by the Bishop of Tuam are by no means a fragrant affair. A bishop had better sit down and die, or cast himself on the charity of his diocese, than figure to the world in the unseemly character of a wholesale evictor, collecting 'red armies' and 'black armies,' and pulling down houses over the heads of their aged and long-settled occupants."

In the Famine these gospel enthusiasts saw not a hideous disaster but a heaven-sent opportunity. "The walls of Irish Romanism," as one of them proclaimed, "had been circumvented again and again, and at the trumpet-blast that sounded in the wailings of the Famine they may be said to have fallen flat. This is the point of hope in Ireland's present crisis." It has been denied that unfair means were adopted to induce the starving peasants to flock to the services of the Bible "messengers," as they called themselves. But the people themselves declared emphatically that bribery was employed. It is significant that whereas the relief, so splendidly organised by the Society of Friends, and the self-sacrificing efforts of that large section of the Protestant clergy, whose aim it was to feed the hungry not to capture converts, were rewarded with the deepest gratitude of the Famine victims, and are still cherished as one of the bright memories of a deplorable era, the fiercest hostility

was aroused against those who sought to combine soup and salvation.

So little was the real strength of Catholicism understood that Protestant opinion, especially in England, persuaded itself that Ireland was about to experience a reformation as epoch-making as that of Germany in the days of Luther. The missionaries, who must have known the truth, played upon this belief as the best means of obtaining support; and the Irish Presbyterian Church actually sent a deputation headed by Dr. Dill to scour the United States for money on the ground that the Lord had ordained "awful national calamities for opening an effectual door to Irish Roman Catholics."

When the pretence of wholesale conversions could no longer be maintained, the cry was raised that emigration would win the battle for Protestantism by preparing the way for a new Plantation. Dr. Dill, as might be expected, positively gloats over this prospect. "It is," he writes, "a matter of easy calculation that if things go on for some years as, to all appearances, they now must do, Popery in Ireland is inevitably doomed. It would seem as if God had resolved to clear out the country in order to replenish it anew. The land is rapidly passing into British hands. With the emigration of the Irish, there has commenced an immigration of the Scotch and English; and numbers are only waiting the adjustment of the land question to settle amongst us. Thus God is renovating the country by the double process of driving Popery

beyond the ocean, and bringing Protestantism from across the Channel. We grieve to see our countrymen leaving us; but who that wishes them well for either world would bid them stay? By remaining they starve—perhaps eternally perish—and certainly perpetuate the miseries of their race. . . . . Therefore we say to them—'Go, in the name of the Lord.' If you conduct yourself well we shall some day hear of you—and how changed you will be! Quickened to life by surrounding Protestantism, you will be seen felling the forests, cutting canals, building railways, rising to comfort, and, best of all, perhaps walking with God. Then go, and the Lord be with you."

In a book, entitled *Twenty Years in the Wild West*, Mrs. Houston, whose husband acquired after the Famine a big stretch of the Martin property in Connemara, gives an account at first hand of the methods of the Protestant missioners who carried the gospel banner west of the Shannon. She heard one clergyman in the course of a single sermon describe the Blessed Virgin as "a sinful unrighteous woman," denounce the Cross as "a blasphemous emblem," and dismiss "Roman Catholics, both generally and individually, as hopelessly doomed, they being liars and idolaters, to everlasting burning." These amenities were not confined to the pulpit or proclaimed only to Protestant ears. It was the pleasant practice of the Evangelists to strew the roadsides in Catholic districts with leaflets and tracts containing the bitterest abuse and ridicule of priests and nuns;

and the bolder proselytisers forced their way into the cabins to ram their doctrine down the throats of the peasantry.

Mrs. Houston, who was a Protestant herself, says of the Protestant clergy who were enlisted for this work:—"Speaking from my own experience, I feel forced to confess that little as was the pay dealt out to them, it was in almost every instance which came under my notice, more than the services of those employed were worth." The evidence of Mrs. Houston is all the more valuable because she cannot be accused of any bias in favour of the Catholic Irish. She was a thoroughgoing defender of the worst aspects of landlordism, as may be seen by her apologia for the clearances which swept Connemara almost as bare of people as the Russian steppes. "Harsh as the word eviction sounds," she says, "it is often, nevertheless, on the landlord's part, the truest mercy towards the poverty-stricken ones to force them to find a home elsewhere."

If the "gospel messengers" wanted precedents to justify their methods, the episcopal bench was only too ready to furnish them. Marcus Beresford, afterwards Primate of all Ireland, was the consistent advocate of a Cromwellian policy of clearing out Catholics who held tenancies of glebe lands and replacing them by Protestants. "I trust," he said, "that every good and faithful minister of his God would sooner have potatoes and salt surrounded with Protestants, than to live like princes surrounded by Papists." Dr. Mant of

Down and Connor learned to his horror that some members of his flock in Belfast actually proposed to attend what he describes as a "Popish oratorio," organised by "a sect of Christians, who are in doctrine dissenters, and in worship separatists from the church of which you profess yourselves to be members." "Allow me," he ends an indignant pastoral letter, "to put you on your guard against a temptation into which you might otherwise be led through inadvertence; and to admonish you to 'touch not the unclean thing,' lest you 'be partakers of other men's sins'." This document is signed "your affectionate bishop, and servant for Jesus' sake."

It is easy enough nowadays to smile at the fanatical bigotry of the Dills, Dallases, Mants, and Nangles. But Ireland seventy years ago was not in the mood for smiling. The outbursts that seem to us akin to the ravings of lunacy were then of very sinister import. Tirades like that of Dr. Dill were used by evicting landlords to justify the most ruthless exercise of their powers, and served to numb the consciences of Protestants in Great Britain as well as Ireland to atrocities as revolting as those perpetrated under Austrian rule in Italy, the iniquity of which fanned to a white flame of fury men who saw in the clearances that followed the Famine the joyful hope that Ireland, as the *Saturday Review* put it, would relapse into "a desert tenanted by lowing herds instead of howling assassins."

The "New Reformation," to use the high-

sounding title of its authors, proved a grotesque failure. So barren was it of results that the majority of historians either ignore it altogether or dismiss it in a few lines as an episode of no importance. This I believe to be a profound mistake. In my opinion, the proselytising crusade of the 'forties and 'fifties was one of the turning points in the history of nineteenth century Ireland. The measure of support which the campaign received in Great Britain convinced Catholics, rightly or wrongly, that the spirit which inspired the Penal Laws so far from being dead needed only a breath to burst again into flame.

Though all Irish Protestants were far from approving of the movement, it was notoriously backed by the section which offered the most uncompromising opposition to the Irish national demand, and these men did not disguise the fact that their object was less to advance the cause of religion than to make political capital by creating, if possible, divisions in the ranks of their opponents. The effect was to intensify sectarian bitterness on all sides, and to obscure the national issue between Great Britain and Ireland by raising what ought to have been regarded as wholly irrelevant considerations about Catholicism and Protestantism.

English statesmen were not above playing a part in this despicable game, though they had not even the excuse of robust Orange bigotry to palliate their offence. Lord John Russell's Ecclesiastical Titles Bill was less a stone flung at the head of the Pope

than an attempt to break down the union between Catholics and Presbyterians to secure tenant right. This particular apple of discord failed, but the plotters in the long run succeeded in widening the gulf that divided adherents of the rival creeds, and in the bitter years that followed the Famine O'Connell's ideal of liberal Catholicism was almost submerged.

Not only was there increased antagonism between Protestants and Catholics, but Catholic opinion was itself sharply divided. While the political leaders who followed O'Connell held views as broad, and even broader, than those professed by him, they lacked his power to carry the Church with them. The Young Irelanders indeed had always been in the black books of the Hierarchy; and though the design of an armed rising had never the slightest chance not merely of success, but of anything approaching organised popular support in the half-starved Ireland of 1848, the hopeless collapse of their schemes was due in a large measure to strenuous clerical opposition. Alarmed by the growing fierceness of Protestant aggression, the higher ranks of the clergy began to think that their wisest policy lay in marshalling all the resources of their people in defence of the rights of the Church. This feeling gained force with the transfer, in 1852, from the Archbishopric of Armagh to that of Dublin of Dr. Cullen, whose services the Vatican afterwards rewarded with a Cardinal's hat. Trained altogether at Rome, the new metropolitan looked at politics with

Italian rather than Irish eyes, and persuaded himself that democratic Nationalists awaited only the opportunity to follow in the footsteps of Mazzini and Garibaldi by declaring open war against the Church.

Gavan Duffy, whom Dr. Cullen had described as "an Irish Mazzini," reprints in his *League of the North and South* a curious analysis of the situation by an Irish Catholic. "The Roman policy towards this country," so the document runs, "has undergone a complete change, and one hostile to its nationality. Until O'Connell's death Rome, or at least an influential party there, believed in the possibility of an independent Catholic State here, capable, with France, of strong action on England. Since O'Connell's death they see only the chance of a Red Republic. . . . Rome returns to her design of treating Ireland as an entrenched camp of Catholicity in the heart of the British Empire, capable of leavening the whole Empire—nay, the whole Anglo-Saxon race—and devotes every nerve to that end. But the first postulate of it is the pacification of Ireland. Ireland must be thoroughly imperialised, loyalised, welded into England. Paul Cullen succeeds Castlereagh."

Though Dr. Cullen played the Castle game by thwarting the popular leaders, and bringing to naught the tenant-right campaign of the 'fifties, he gained little for his side. The politicians, who claimed to possess his confidence, were a gang of despicable adventurers animated by no nobler ideal

than the hope of securing plunder and preferment. To themselves they were the Catholic Brigade; Irish Nationalists nicknamed them in grim contempt "The Pope's Brass Band," and the lapse of seventy years has done nothing to soften the feelings aroused by the shameless treachery of Sadleir and Keogh. They destroyed the hope of a coalition between Catholics and Protestants which might have anticipated the work of Davitt and Parnell, and made Land Reform the battle-cry of a united Ireland. Their crusade, however, did less damage to the cause they opposed than to that which, nominally at least, they professed to champion. It cannot be said that the Irish people weakened in devotion to their faith, but a wedge was driven between the Catholic democracy and the Hierarchy, whose members had consented to act as Castle bishops.

The fundamental article of the Unionist creed is that Irish nationalism abases itself in the dust at the lightest whisper of a prelate, and maintains the struggle for self-government only because it fears the crozier more than English bullets and bayonets. This argument is flatly contradicted by the salient facts of Irish politics. The Irish demand may be right or wrong, but it is a demand to which the people have converted the Hierarchy, not one which the Hierarchy has imposed upon an unwilling or apathetic people. In 1800 half the Episcopacy supported the Union, and, as Gavan Duffy said, "applauded Castlereagh and Cooke in language which would have been unbecomingly

obsequious if addressed to Cardinal Fransoni or Cardinal Antonelli." O'Connell, whom political Protestants denounce as a slave cowering under the frown of ecclesiastical tyrants, fought a solid phalanx of prelates in the Veto controversy, and pushed the campaign to such extremes that effigies of the Irish bishops were publicly burned by Irish Catholics. When Dr. Cullen set himself to undo O'Connell's work by making the Church an instrument of the Irish Executive, and, above all, when he took the extreme course of silencing priests who espoused the popular cause, he met with resistance no less fierce.

George Henry Moore was the most fervent Catholic of his day, and, unlike the Young Irelanders, had never been suspected of anything akin to latitudinarianism. Yet it was he who indicted Dr. Cullen's policy in these outspoken words. "The rights and liberties of a nation, the honour and integrity of a glorious Church, whose martyrs are patriots, are at the hammer, knocked down at the basest price for which humanity was ever sacrificed—sold for English lies and foreign intrigues, and sold by the hands that are 'in the same dish with the people'." With prophetic insight Moore foretold the inevitable result. "The priest," he said, "is to be compelled to desert the people, and the people will desert the priests. The desertion has begun already; it will become stronger every day. The people will not desert their thatch and their fireside to support Italian intrigues and foreign despotism, and as soon as you

have degraded your priesthood, sold your Church, and lost your people, you will have to appeal—and not in vain—to those whom you now vilify for protection from your own dishonour."

In the mid-'fifties these may well have seemed empty words, the last shriek of baffled rage from a dying faction which had no longer the power either to help or to hinder. Ireland seemed more completely conquered than at any period since the British occupation began. To all appearances the Union principle had triumphed. It was accepted by the Church; and the *Times*, forgetting the epithets which it had been wont to hurl at the Irish clergy, graciously commended Dr. Cullen as a person "who has merited the approbation and confidence of the English Government and the Irish Executive," and "whose fall would be a loss to English interests and views."

On the part of the people there was no longer faith in organised political action. It was taken for granted that those who entered Parliament did so not to serve the country, but to serve themselves at its expense. Only one passion moved the mass of the nation—a frenzied desire to cut loose at all hazards from the land of their birth. Every port was crammed with emigrants; and the official rulers, instead of deploring the disaster and taking prompt measures to remove the ban that denied to Irishmen a living on Irish soil, hailed this exodus as a proof of the blessings that the Union had brought in its train.

Reviewing the events of a decade during which

over a million and a half of the flower of the population had fled from the shores of Ireland, the Viceroy, Lord Carlisle, declared blandly, "I feel I am justified in speaking to you, upon the whole, in the terms of congratulation and hopefulness." It was this unctuous nobleman, who informed Irishmen that "Nature in her wise economy seems specially to have fitted this island to be the mother of flocks and herds," and, referring to the flight of the young and strong, announced, "this is not a symptom, with whatever immediate and local inconvenience it may no doubt be attended, at which, viewed at large, we ought to repine." Naturally, landlords, whose aim it was to clear their estates of pestilent tenants, were inclined to believe that the millennium had dawned when a policy of extermination, advocated by an English Viceroy, received if not the open blessing, at least the tacit approval of the heads of the Catholic Church.

It was equally natural that the rank and file of the people should take a very different view of the policy of Dr. Cullen and his lay agents. The result was not, as Ascendancy politicians prophesied, to rally support for the Union, nor did it, as fervent Protestants hoped, induce the masses to scrap Catholic dogma in favour of the Thirty-nine Articles or the Westminster Confession of Faith. In religious matters the Hierarchy spoke with the old authority, but when its members began to lean towards the Castle their political influence over their flocks dwindled to vanishing

point. The proof of this is that Cardinal Cullen, whose intervention in Irish politics was inspired by the determination to make impossible any recurrence of the revolutionary upheaval of 1848, lived to see, as the reward of his exertions, an Ireland dominated not by the mild Girondism of men like Smith O'Brien and Gavan Duffy, but by what were in his eyes the terrorist doctrines of Fenianism.

I shall deal elsewhere with the political side of the Fenian movement; here I am concerned with its reaction on the influence of the clergy in secular affairs. Were it true, as Unionists contend, that all Irish discontents have their roots in Vatican policy, Fenianism would never have raised its head in Ireland. The creed was no less hateful to the bishops than to the Castle, and all their forces were arrayed against it. Fenians, who refused to repudiate their "illicit oaths," were denied the sacraments, and were threatened with excommunication for contumaciously continuing members of a secret society. It was not an Orange fanatic, but a Catholic prelate, who declared that hell was not hot enough, nor eternity long enough to punish such miscreants as the Fenians. Yet Fenianism, denounced from every altar, spread throughout the length and breadth of Ireland like a fire in dry grass. If it failed in its main object its failure was due to internal defects, and not to any weakening of enthusiasm caused by clerical hostility.

Ironically enough, in the hour of its defeat,

Fenianism won for the Church, which was hurling anathemas at the heads of its members, a greater victory than the Hierarchy could ever have hoped to gain by the policy of accepting as a sacred command, the lightest whisper of Dublin Castle. The Fenians as Fenians were sublimely unconcerned about the Protestant Establishment. In their view indeed the maintenance of abuses had a positive value, inasmuch as, in the words of one of their official declarations, such scandals served to create "a healthy element of wrath against British rule." On this ground they denounced Catholic Emancipation as "an insidious and fatal boon," whose "chief effect has been to retard the winning of our independence, and to denationalise thousands of our countrymen." With the bewildering logic peculiar to English statesmen in their dealings with Ireland, Mr. Gladstone heard in the crack of the Fenian rifles the tolling of a bell which reminded him that the time had come to disestablish the Irish Church.

That the reform was long overdue is not questioned to-day even by those who boast themselves the uncompromising champions of Irish Protestantism. Tender as the British are towards anomalies and anachronisms when these serve their purpose, they had come to the conclusion that they stood to lose nothing by disestablishing the Irish Church; and, on the contrary, might hope to profit by diverting attention for a time at least from the more urgent questions of the land and self-government, with which as yet they had no intention of

dealing in any serious spirit. Politicians, who a few years before had set their faces like flint against the most moderate proposals for Church Reform, suddenly discovered that the institution which they had exalted as the Ark of the Covenant was really a upas tree tainting all Irish life. There was no difficulty in finding facts to justify this conclusion; the marvel was that these facts had no significance for the English mind until 1869.

Lord Lytton once described the Irish Church as "the greatest Irish Bull in the world," and the phrase was no less accurate than apt. Its defenders sought to justify the granting of subsidies, on the ground that the Church was a missionary organisation discharging a duty of supreme importance to the moral and spiritual welfare of the State. In the Disestablishment Debates Gladstone blew this argument sky-high with a few simple statistical facts. He pointed out that when the Penal Laws came into operation the proportion of Catholics to Protestants in Ireland was as two to one. These laws were framed with diabolical ingenuity to weaken the hold of Catholicism on the popular mind, yet after they had been in force for the best part of a century the relative strength of the two creeds remained the same. Following the relaxation of the code in the days of Grattan's Parliament, Catholicism began to forge ahead, and at the Union its professors outnumbered Protestants by three to one. A generation later the religious census of 1834 revealed the fact that Catholics had again improved their advantage, their majority

now being four to one. Then came the dreadful era of the Famine, the clearances, and the great emigration which reduced Ireland's population by over two millions. Yet though Catholics suffered infinitely worse than members of other creeds, the first religious census taken after the catastrophe in 1861 showed that the 1834 proportion of four to one had remained unchanged.

The prophecies of the zealots of the "New Reformation" were at last seen in their true light; and by a notable stroke of irony their furious assaults on Catholicism, and their forecasts of its speedy overthrow, served no other purpose than to demonstrate to English Protestants the futility as well as the injustice of maintaining the Irish Establishment. The Ascendancy did not easily accept defeat. Its members instead of meekly bowing to the laws, resistance to which justified in their eyes a general battue of Fenians, took up a position which was scarcely distinguishable from that of James Stephens and John O'Leary. They denied absolutely the right of England to interfere with the Protestant Establishment, and declared that if their privileged position was assailed the obligation of loyalty no longer existed. As one Orange parson put it: "People will say, 'Oh, your loyalty is conditional.' I say it is conditional, and it must be explained as such. We must speak out boldly and tell our gracious Queen that if she break her oath she has no longer any claim to the crown." Pastors, who in the tithe struggle had led military expeditions to raid Catholic stack-

yards and hen-roosts, and boasted that in doing so they were teaching the lawless to respect the law, now pledged one another to resist the law by blowing up their churches with gunpowder before they accepted an apostate system.

If these threats did not suffice to prevent disestablishment, they undoubtedly aided the Church in its struggle against disendowment—a fact which the Irish people did not lose sight of in their future struggles to assert their rights. In the generation that followed, Land League orators could always find a precedent for their most vehement utterances in Orange fulminations against the Irish Church Act, just as Sinn Feiners to-day have no difficulty in justifying their words or deeds by pointing to the example of Sir Edward Carson. Irish Nationalists may have no proper respect for law and order, but it is unfortunate for opponents who seek to make this a reproach to them that they can always produce evidence to show that, however reprehensible their methods may be, they are modelled in principle, and usually in detail, upon tactics originally invented by Irish Unionists.

Chapter VI.

VOICES IN THE WILDERNESS.

The Famine made shipwreck of the hopes of the Young Irelanders no less than of the O'Connellites. To the eye of contemporary observers, it seemed as if landlordism alone emerged unscathed from the maelstrom in which the fortunes of Ireland had been engulfed. But, if the winds and waves of those terrible years failed to sink the ship of landlordism, a very small proportion of the original crew survived to celebrate the return to harbour. The Union system in this crisis proved only a little less disastrous to its sworn champions than to the mass of the Irish people. Not a few Unionists discerned from the first the real nature of the danger that threatened them, but they lacked the courage and decision to meet it, because it was an article of their political faith that, however great the need, and however righteous the object aimed at, they must abstain at all hazards from taking common action with the Irish democracy against evils due to English rule.

When their vision was not obscured by what they believed to be party interests, Irish landlords had little difficulty in seeing the right way. Early in the 'thirties an Irish Commission, manned largely

by landlords, formulated a scheme for dealing with distress which, had it been adopted, would not only have prevented the collapse of the poor law system under the strain of the Famine, but might have revolutionised the whole economic future of the country. The basis of their plan was to substitute for the English workhouse system a policy of developing the material resources of the country by the reclamation of waste land, by drainage and building schemes, and other constructive public works. It is one of the most illuminating incidents in Union history that the unanimous recommendations of men of all Irish parties were contemptuously rejected in favour of a Bill drafted after a six weeks' visit to Ireland by an English official who assumed, he tells us, as his "governing principle" that "the poor law of Ireland should assimilate in all respects as nearly as possible to the poor law system now established in England."

In 1906 another Irish Commission, after three years' close investigation, condemned the existing workhouse system root and branch, and proposed a scheme which was in all its essentials that which Lord John Russell had dismissed as beneath consideration seventy years before. Our latter-day rulers did not, like their predecessors in the 'thirties, assail the report as an outrage on Ricardian economics. Wiser in their generation, they showered praises upon its authors while quietly shelving their proposals, which from that day to this have lain undisturbed in some dusty pigeon-hole in Dublin Castle.

The threat of the Famine startled for a moment the members of the Ascendancy into a realisation of their duties as Irishmen. Conservative journals declared that Ireland was not governed, and must govern herself; and at a meeting in the Rotunda attended by nearly twenty Peers, thirty Members of Parliament, and six hundred gentlemen of all shades of political opinion, it was decided to create an Irish party for Irish purposes. The gathering, according to Gavan Duffy, "called on the Government to suspend the Navigation Laws and the Corn Laws, and to sacrifice any sum that might be necessary to save the lives of the people." Unfortunately, the impetus died almost in the moment of its birth. The Famine became an issue in English politics; and, in the words of George Henry Moore, "at the first sounding of the trumpet of party, each dull old hack took the same dull old place in the same dull old ranks that he had occupied in every previous session."

Some landlords, realizing that Irish distress would be used by English Free Traders as a lever to overthrow the Corn Laws, asserted even while famine was stalking through the land that the cry of suffering was raised merely as a pretence for withholding the payment of rent. Others insisted, as men of their type have been insisting for over a century in every crisis, political, social, or economic, that the real need of the situation was not a measure of relief but the application of a drastic system of coercion to maintain "law and order." Coercion may have been necessary to save

the landlord's rent, but it was the employment of the armed forces of Great Britain to act as bailiffs for the Ascendancy that was responsible for the holocaust of innocent lives. There was no famine in Ireland in the sense in which the word is ordinarily used. The potato crop failed indeed in three successive seasons, but during these seasons the value of other crops far exceeded the loss caused by the potato shortage. In 1846 the value of Irish agricultural produce and cattle was calculated at £46,000,000, and in 1847 the figures were £38,000,000. During the worst famine year —1847—the exports of live stock alone exceeded by half a million the money value of the food dispensed in soup kitchens to three millions of starving people.

In any normal country O'Connell's demand that the export of food should be prohibited, and the ports thrown open to enable supplies to be obtained from abroad, would have been adopted as a matter of course. Before the Union the Dublin Parliament in times of distress had enforced this policy, and it had been frequently put in practice in Continental States. But the pundits of the 'forties discovered that the proposal conflicted with the theories of the Manchester School, with the result that tens of thousands of people were condemned to death by slow starvation as a sacrificial offering upon the altar of the new Victorian Moloch. The dominant principle of all the relief measures was that there should be a minimum of interference with the normal processes of commerce, and, above

all, that the landlord must get his rent. While starving hordes besieged the government depots in the hope of obtaining a handful of yellow meal —"Peel's brimstone," as it was called—troops were hurried to Ireland, not to aid in the task of distributing relief, but to furnish armed guards for the safe escort to the ports of the cattle and corn which were sent out of the country that gold might flow in to fill the landlords' pockets.

There were, one is thankful to say for the honour of human nature, scores and hundreds of owners of land who did their duty, and more than their duty. Men like George Henry Moore felt themselves amply repaid for the forfeit of their wealth by the knowledge that none of their tenants had died from want; others, who could not make this boast, made even heavier sacrifices out of leaner purses in the vain endeavour to do what the Government had left undone; and some, whose names are still held in grateful remembrance, gave not only their money but their lives in the fight against the pestilence that followed, as always, in the track of famine.

Proprietors, who put their own interests second to those of the community, were a minority, and not even a strong minority. The class as a whole remained true to type, and its policy was in accordance with its traditions. Irish economics were based on the simple principle that the owner took all the produce of the land, except that proportion of the potatoes which enabled the tenant to retain sufficient strength to till the ground. When the

potatoes failed, the average landlord saw no reason why his profits should be reduced to make good the deficiency. So shamelessly did he evade his obligations that even his strenuous champion, the *Times*, was forced to protest against the "confederacy of rich proprietors to dun the national treasury, and to eke out from its resources that employment for the poor which they are themselves bound to provide by every sense of duty to a land from which they derive their incomes." Remonstrances of this kind did not perturb the mass of Irish landowners. They were resolved that they would not step into the breach. Whether other agencies provided relief or whether the tenants died of hunger was in the minds of many of the ruling caste a secondary consideration. Even Sir Charles Trevelyan, upon whom Mitchel has conferred an unenviable mortality as the high priest of heartless officialism, was shocked to discover that when the Government distributed turnip seed in Mayo to avert starvation the crops produced were seized for rent.

During all these ghastly years the officials, whose duty it was to administer relief, were not as hard-worked as were the bailiff and his colleagues of the Crowbar Brigade, to whom the task was allotted of demolishing houses and driving the occupants forth to perish on the roadside. One branch of the law was engaged in passing measures ostensibly to prevent famine, while another laboured even more strenuously to create and intensify it. As Mr. T. P. O'Connor says in his *Parnell Move-*

ment:—"A passion—that looked something like an epidemic of homicidal mania—had seized many of the landlords for wholesale clearances at the very moment when the people were confronted with universal hunger." Writing of one poor law union alone—that of Kilrush—a Government official, Captain Kennedy, states that during the six most terrible months of the famine 900 houses, containing at least 4,000 occupants, had been levelled. "As soon as one horde of houseless and all but naked paupers are provided for in the workhouse," Captain Kennedy adds, "another wholesale eviction doubles the number, who, in their turn, pass through the same ordeal of wandering from house to house, or burrowing in bogs or behind ditches, till, broken down by privation and exposure to the elements, they seek the workhouse or die by the roadside."

The Encumbered Estates Act was passed by the Government with the professed object of remedying this state of affairs, but, like all English-made land legislation, it intensified the evils it was supposed to remove. "It exterminated," in Isaac Butt's words, "many insolvent proprietors, but it ruined many solvent ones; and in the process it beggared many, both proprietors and creditors, who but for its operation would now be independent, in the possession of the properties of which it deprived them." Landlords with some reason denounced the system of confiscation under which property worth £25,000,000 was sold to a new set of proprietors for £10,000,000, but neither the

Government nor the owners recognised that in these sales tenant-property to the value of at least £3,000,000 was disposed of without a penny of compensation to those who had created it. The parliamentary title given to purchasers was considered to wipe out all obligations, and instead of their burdens being lightened, the tenants found themselves under the heel of a new set of taskmasters who inaugurated their reign by raising rents all round, and enforced their legal rights by clearances so drastic that, as John Bright said, "the sole export of Ireland now consists of Irishmen." In Connemara, to take only one instance, the Law Life Insurance Company spent £180,000 in the purchase of the Martin estates. It promptly resold land to the value of £70,000, and, without expending a shilling in improvements, succeeded in extracting £10,000 a year in rent from the rest of the property, a sum far exceeding that which the previous owners had drawn from the undivided estate.

If the Famine did not cause landlordism to relax its grip, it destroyed such moral authority as the system could claim to possess. Up till then Nationalists, while resisting the exactions of individual landlords, had not directly challenged the general principle underlying these exactions. Extremists and moderates alike clung to the hope of a union of all classes against alien rule, shutting their eyes to the fact that alien rule had been made possible simply because its Irish supporters believed that it gave them an effective guarantee

of non-interference with their economic powers and privileges. Advocates of physical force, who differed on every other point from the apostles of moral suasion, agreed with them not only on the desirability, but on the necessity of winning over the landlords.

John Mitchel was the first leader since Wolfe Tone to proclaim that if the men of property failed to do their duty the obvious solution was to fall back on "that very respectable class the men of no property." Before the Famine Mitchel had held, like all representative Nationalists, that landlords would not always set profits before patriotism. This view he now abandoned for ever. "The effect wrought upon me," he said, "by the events I saw passing was a thorough conviction that Irish landlords had finally taken their side *against* their own people and *for* the foreign enemy—that all the symptoms of landlord 'nationality' which had deluded us into the 'Irish Council,' and had kept us long vainly wooing the aristocracy into the ranks of their countrymen, were a deliberate fraud."

While Mitchel was arriving at these conclusions, Fintan Lalor on his farm in the Midlands was evolving a plan of action, destined in other times and in other hands to sound the knell of Irish landlordism. Like all fruitful schemes of reform, Lalor's plan was in essentials exceedingly simple, though, after the fashion of his era, he overlaid it with irrelevant metaphysics and that pseudo-

philosophic rhetoric which, again like Mitchel, he borrowed at second-hand from Carlyle.

"It is a mere question," Lalor said, "between a people and a class, between a people of eight millions and a class of eight thousand. They or we must quit this island. It is a people to be saved or lost; it is the island to be kept or surrendered. They have served us with a general writ of ejectment. Wherefore, I say, let them get a notice to quit at once, or we shall oust possession under the law of nature. . . . Strangers they are in this land they call theirs, strangers here and strangers everywhere; owning no country and owned by none; rejecting Ireland and rejected by England; tyrants to this land and slaves to another; here they stand, hating and hated, their hand ever against ours as ours against them." Before pronouncing sentence of excommunication Lalor, it is true, had hoped to make terms with the dominant caste, and offered landlords "new titles" which, had they been accepted, would have enabled them to become, in Mitchel's words, "the most powerful and popular aristocracy on earth."

But Lalor's terms differed from those put forward either by the O'Connell or the Young Ireland leaders. These demanded adherence to the principles of Repeal; Lalor insisted that the vital need was to replace the anarchy resulting from the failure of the potato by a new social constitution in which the aristocracy should combine for the first time with the great body and mass of the people to evolve "a new form of organisation—a

new mode of living and labour." In words that sounded strangely in the 'forties, but the truth of which is self-evident to-day, Lalor warned the landlords of the consequences of a failure to co-operate. "You are far less important to the people," he wrote, "than the people are to you. You cannot stand or act alone, but they can. In the case that has arisen the main power is in their hands, the little in yours. Your power of position has departed. You cannot reform and reorganise a whole people without their consent and co-operation. You cannot act against them—you cannot act without them. They can do what is wanted of themselves, and without your assistance. They have the will, and may learn the way."

The appeal for co-operation was rejected or rather ignored, as Lalor must have forseen, and he proceeded to formulate his plan of campaign. Its novelty was less in its practical proposals than in its author's expression of them, for the policy of direct action which he advocated had been instinctively adopted by the Irish peasantry in every crisis produced by the pressure of landlord tyranny. From the days of the Plantation onwards, Tories, Whiteboys, Thrashers, Blackfeet, Rockites, Terry Alts, Ribbonmen, and other more obscure combinations, had practised, if they did not preach, the central doctrines of Lalor's creed, and though they did not claim, as he did, to stand for the right of "moral insurrection" this in effect was the end and aim of their efforts.

In Lalor's own lifetime the seven years' Tithe

War had proved what a formidable resistance the Irish peasant could offer to oppressive measures. The fight against tithes was badly organised. There was no central control; districts had to act on their own initiative; and for the most part the struggle was waged by little groups of men working without cohesion or adequate backing. If they did not succeed in their main purpose of abolishing tithes, they destroyed the existing system of collection. In 1831 the unpaid tithes amounted to £104,000 and the Government undertook to exact the arrears from defaulters at the point of the bayonet. A desperate series of encounters followed in which much blood was shed, but in the end victory rested with the Anti-Tithe Men, for the Government, having recovered £12,000 at a cost of £15,000, came to the conclusion that it was wiser to wipe off the deficit than to fling good money after bad.

Fintan Lalor's scheme was to mobilise the same spirit of resistance against landlordism as a whole. The policy of denying rent and resisting ejectment would not merely save the peasantry from the doom that threatened them, but would provide a lever by which independence could be secured. Undoubtedly Lalor was wrong in his belief that Ireland, as he said, "would not buckle a belt to fight for Repeal"; but he was right when he argued that there was a wolf-dog in every cabin which required only to be unmuzzled to achieve more solid results than the drums and tramplings of O'Connell's monster meetings.

The time was ripe for Lalor's plan, but the leadership required to give effect to it was not forthcoming. Lalor, who saw so clearly what ought to be done, lacked himself the power of doing it. He had no gift of managing men, and his passionate dogmatism made him incapable not only of suffering fools gladly, but of accepting criticism even in its mildest form. John Mitchel, his first and greatest convert, suffered from the same defects, and his substitution of a refusal to pay poor rate for a refusal to pay rent—a proposal which made nonsense of Lalor's scheme of creating a new social constitution—induced at the outset a coldness between the two enthusiasts, and prevented any hope of a fruitful combination.

The real obstacle to success, however, did not lie in the temperamental qualities of Lalor and Mitchel, but in the rooted conviction of their contemporaries that the weapon of social revolt should not be employed for the purpose of effecting a political revolution. O'Connell declared truly enough in the debate on the Coercion Bill of 1833 that "predial agitation subsisted for forty years before political agitation commenced." But instead of using predial agitation to give force to political agitation he made it a virtue of his crusade that it had tended to diminish agrarian upheavals. In the dark days of 1847, a Catholic bishop informed Conciliation Hall that, though "the famine is spreading with fearful rapidity and scores of people are dying of starvation and fever, the tenants are bravely paying their rents." "I

thank God," said John O'Connell on reading this announcement, "that I live among a people who would rather die of hunger than defraud their landlords of the rent."

If the Young Irelanders did not push respect for the rights of property to this extreme, they did not fall far short of it. Smith O'Brien, after he had formally taken the field against the Government, forbade his followers to seize grain convoys to feed the starving people; and when it was a question of cutting down trees to make a barricade he insisted that permission must first be obtained from the owners of the property. He declared indignantly that he would not lead a *Jacquerie;* and, as one of his opponents declared, his philosophy of revolution seemed to be to "wait till muskets were showered down from heaven, and angels sent to pull the triggers."

The majority of his colleagues, it is true, did not hold with all Smith O'Brien's scruples. But they could not conceive of a revolution in which the impetus came from below instead of above, and the possible alienation of the upper and middle classes by a direct appeal to the people horrified them even more than the social confusion which they felt would result from the adoption of Lalor's policy. It has been argued that Lalor formulated his theories too late, that the result would have been different had he preached them before instead of during the Famine when the national will was weakened, and over three-fourths of the country

the only issue that mattered was how to provide for the next meal. I agree with Mr. Arthur Griffith that in 1848 "the nation was too weak and ill to fight for anything," but, I believe, the real reason why Lalor's doctrines bore no fruit for a generation after his death must be sought deeper down. His plan demanded for success a belief in democracy, which the Irish leaders of the period with a few exceptions did not possess. Whole-heartedly desirous as they were of serving the masses at any personal sacrifice, however great, they had not sufficient confidence in the people to believe in their ability to help themselves.

No orthodox precedent existed for a campaign such as Lalor demanded. As he pointed out, the effect of an anti-rent war would be "to make the hostile army a mob, as your own will be; force it to act on the offensive, and oblige it to undertake operations for which it was never constructed." Unfortunately, the leaders to whom Lalor appealed were more afraid of mobs on their own side than of regular armies on the side of their enemies. Even had they all been of Mitchel's opinion, it is questionable if they could have successfully conducted a No Rent campaign. For one thing, they would have had to reckon with the uncompromising opposition of the Church. In those days it was taken for granted by Unionists that the priesthood only awaited a favourable opportunity to starve out the garrison by ordering tenants to withhold their rents; whereas, on the contrary,

the Church's insistence on property rights did more to fill the landlord's pockets than did the fear of his bailiffs and drivers.

The Irish leaders rather than the Irish people had to develop politically before even a modification of Lalor's policy could become practical politics. It demanded for its success the emergence of a democratic ideal which was no less anathema to the bourgeois democrats of the 'forties than it was to their aristocratic opponents. Unionists, indeed, saw more clearly than some professing Nationalists that the man who bade the Irish tenants hold their rent was a more formidable enemy than the orators who electrified audiences with rhetorical sword-speeches. "Mr. Lalor," said the *Times* in a characteristic obituary notice, "was undoubtedly one of the (if not the) ablest as well as most dangerous of those men who perverted abilities of a very high order to the worst of purposes."

Lalor died with his work not only uncompleted, but, to all appearances, not even begun. Yet, beneath the surface, forces were at work destined to ensure the triumph of his creed; and the outstanding feature in the history of the next generation is the development of the revolutionary, or rather evolutionary, processes, which led Nationalist Ireland to adopt with scarcely a dissonant voice in the days of the Land League doctrines that were denounced as heresy to the national idea when Fintan Lalor first preached them in the still darker days of the Great Famine.

Agrarianism, in a favourite phrase of Lalor's, was a self-acting engine which would generate its own steam without cost or care, and once linked to it Repeal, instead of being dragged, would carry itself. With Lalor's death the wheels of the engine did not cease to revolve. The peasant saw to it that steam was kept up, but he stoked the fires to ensure the freedom of his own fields, and not, as Lalor would have had him do, to establish a new social constitution.

The passing of the Encumbered Estates Act threatened Ulster tenant-right; and the Protestant farmer in the years that followed the Famine showed himself as ready as his Catholic neighbours to push Lalor's doctrine to the utmost limits. "Orangemen and Roman Catholics," the Marquis of Londonderry informed the House of Lords in 1850, "have united together to obtain a reduction of rent, tenant right, and fixity of tenure; and not only to do that, but to force their landlords by intimidation to accede to their purpose." The following letter, read in the course of the debate, shows the temper which ruled in County Down, then, as now, the citadel of Orangeism. "There is a very bad spirit prevalent amongst the farmers . . . by the calumnies heaped on the landlords by many of the Presbyterian ministers who have preached everything wicked and libellous to the people. Poor Anketel's family have had a narrow escape. If the beds had been fixed into the other window of their bedroom husband and wife would have been shot in their bed. I understand the

attempt to assassinate them was known and talked of in Comber two days before. The system is now to intimidate and prevent any person taking a farm when the tenant has been ejected. In short, Down is now a second Tipperary." According to the *Annual Register*, Ulster in 1850 presented "a scene of terrorism, outrage, and bloodshed equal to the worst times of anarchy." Sir Edward Carson declares, and the declaration is a fixed article of Unionist faith, that only Catholic Nationalists are so degraded as to screen agrarian offenders. A crown official, however, told the 1852 Committee on Outrages that in overwhelmingly Protestant counties "murders were almost invariably committed in broad daylight, owing to the 'sympathy' felt with the assassins, and the consciousness that nobody dare inform against them."

When Gavan Duffy joined north and south in a united demand for tenant-right, he made a step towards Fintan Lalor's position by warning the landlords that a refusal to concede a fair rent might provoke a decision to withhold rent altogether till a settlement was accomplished. But the movement never reached a stage when this policy could be applied.

After Duffy's withdrawal Lalor's gospel seemed to have suffered a total eclipse. Fenianism was then becoming the strongest force in Irish politics, and to the Fenians, as to the O'Connellites and the Young Irelanders, agrarianism made no appeal. They regarded it not as a help but as a positive

hindrance, for they argued that at the best it could only damage landlordism, and must necessarily dissipate strength and absorb resources that would otherwise be employed in the supreme task of overthrowing the foundations of British rule in Ireland. As the power of Stephens and his fellows grew agrarian outrages diminished, until in 1866 and 1867—the years in which Fenianism attained its apogee—they had dropped to the lowest figures on record since the Union. But the landlords did not on this account stay their hands, and Michael Davitt points out that between 1858 and 1870 close upon 15,000 families were cleared out of their homes and holdings.

As the present Republican movement bases its claim on Great Britain's declarations of the right of subject nations to shape their own destinies, so the Fenians found their strongest arguments in the speeches of English statesmen and the utterances of English newspapers. At that period wave after wave of enthusiasm for the Italian *Risorgimento* was sweeping across England, and politicians, poets, and journalists were preaching the sacred right of insurrection to Romans, Venetians, and Sicilians, apparently oblivious of the fact that their burning words were setting the heather on fire in Ireland as well as Italy.

The *Times*, anticipating President Wilson, laid down a doctrine which the Fenian organisers took good care should be heard in quarters where the thunders of Printing House Square ordinarily aroused contempt rather than enthusiastic ap-

proval. "The destiny of a nation," it proclaimed, "ought to be determined, not by the opinions of other nations, but by the opinion of the nation itself. To decide whether they are well governed or not, or rather whether the degree of extortion, corruption, and cruelty to which they are subject is sufficient to justify armed resistance, is for those who live under that government—not for those who, being exempt from its oppression, feel a sentimental or a theological interest in its continuance."

Fuel for the Fenian fires was provided not only by the English Press, but by Cabinet Ministers; and the right of nations to change or choose their rulers and form of government was solemnly enunciated in a speech from the throne. The Irish reply to this was a National Petition to Queen Victoria, signed by over half-a-million adult Irishmen, demanding a public vote by ballot and universal suffrage in Ireland to make known the wishes of the people, whether for a native government and legislative independence, or for the existing system of government by the Imperial Parliament. "Petitioners," the document concluded, "trust that their request will be considered stronger, not weaker, in your Majesty's estimation, for being made respectfully, peacefully, and without violence, instead of being marked by such proceedings as have occurred during the recent political changes in Italy, which have been so largely approved by your Majesty's Ministers."

The petition was duly presented, but, as was

anticipated by its authors, it did not obtain even the courtesy of an answer; though Britain unabashed still continued with one voice to assert that a vote of the population was the test of the legitimacy or oppressiveness of a government. The Fenian organisers, A. M. Sullivan relates in *New Ireland,* insisted that the contemptuous silence with which the petition was received sprang from "disdain for a people who would not clutch the arms whereby alone their right to choose their own government could be secured." An article in the *Times* confirmed this view, and must have been worth on the most moderate estimate thousands of recruits to the physical force movement. "It is quite time," the leader-writer declared, "that all the struggling nationalities should clearly understand that freemen have no sympathy with men who do nothing but howl and shriek in their fetters. Liberty is a serious game to be played out, as the Greek told the Persian, with knives and hatchets, and not with drawled epigrams and soft petitions. We may prate among us of moral courage and moral force, but we have also physical courage and physical force kept for ready use. Is this so with the Italians of Central Italy? Are these Italians prepared to fight for the freedom they have? If so, well; they will certainly secure it; if not, let Austria flog them with scorpions, instead of whips, and we in England shall only stop our ears against their screams."

O'Connell proved the case for Repeal by the admissions of British statesmen of the rank in-

justice and inefficiency of the existing system; Stephens demonstrated still more conclusively that separation was a policy completely in accord with the principles which England unanimously declared should prevail in a free Europe. But when Stephens passed from theory to practice, English politicians, while still cheering the revolutionary sentiments of Mazzini, proceeded in Ireland to adopt and improve upon the methods of King Bomba.

When the Government of the day asked Parliament for powers to effect a general round-up of Fenian "suspects," only one English voice, that of John Bright, was raised in protest against the substitution of coercion for statesmanship. "All history teaches us," said Bright, "that it is not in human nature that men should be content under any system of legislation, and of institutions such as exist in Ireland. You may pass this Bill. You may put the Home Secretary's five hundred men into jail—you may do more than this, you may suppress the conspiracy and put down the insurrection, but the moment it is suppressed there will still remain the germs of the malady, and from those germs will grow up as heretofore another crop of insurrection, and another harvest of misfortune. And it may be that those who sit here eighteen years after this moment will find another Ministry and another Secretary of State ready to propose to you another administration of the same ever-failing and ever-poisonous medicines." Bright was even a truer prophet than he knew. Not

eighteen years but more than fifty have passed since he uttered his appeal for statesmanship, and because that appeal still produces no effective response Ireland is to-day held in subjection by infinitely more drastic measures of militaristic despotism than those which John Bright deplored.

Fenianism failed in a military sense almost as completely as did the Young Irelanders. But Unionists, who made merry over its failure and persuaded themselves that at last the Irish must realize the futility of resistance to Ascendancy rule, overlooked one vital element in the situation. If the Fenians could not place in the field troops capable of defeating the British army, they gave a new impetus to the forces which were fighting an uphill battle against landlord power. His experiences as Smith O'Brien's lieutenant at Ballingarry convinced Stephens that the only hope of success for an Irish revolutionary movement was to base itself solidly on the masses. Instead of seeking converts, as other revolutionists had done, amongst the landed gentry and middle-class men with a stake in the country, Stephens placed his faith in shop-assistants, school-teachers, small farmers, and labourers, thus creating the first national movement which was democratic not only in its aim but in its organisation and leadership.

In theory the Fenians held with the O'Connellites and the Young Irelanders against Fintan Lalor, but in practice they gave effect to Lalor's creed that the driving-force of a revolutionary

movement must come from below and not from above. Though events were to show that it was not possible at this stage to divorce nationalism from agrarianism, undoubtedly, the Fenian leaven was the main element in the creation of a new conception of agrarianism. The young generation, who flocked by tens of thousands into the Fenian "circles," learned more than the use of arms. They gained a wider outlook on national problems, a clearer consciousness of the power of democracy to grapple with these problems, and a sense of discipline which increased their value as a political force, while at the same time it deepened their self-confidence and strengthened their determination. If James Stephens and his colleagues did not build as they desired, in some respects they builded better than they knew, and the democratic spirit roused into action by them was destined in the years that followed to destroy the central citadel of Unionist Ascendancy.

Islington
Public
Library

Chapter VII.

OLIVE BRANCH OR BATTLE-AXE?

Lord Morley in his biography rightly praises Gladstone as the first statesman who departed from the tradition, which was, as he says, almost a point of honour, that British Cabinets should make laws for Ireland out of their own heads, and that, in particular, it was heinously wrong to consult Irish opinion about proposed legislative schemes. Even Gladstone learned this lesson slowly. It was in a large measure his failure to draw obvious deductions from self-evident facts that led directly to the Land War of the 'eighties. Disestablishment and the Land Act of 1870, though an advance on previous English efforts, fell lamentably short of being root-and-branch reforms. Gladstone, however, flattered himself that his first tentative experiments were final solutions, and for many a long year he believed that only the wiles of Irish politicians prevented the Irish masses from entering joyfully into the kingdom which he had prepared for them.

The Irish people, touchingly grateful as they were for even small mercies, knew from the first that Gladstonian policy in 1870, however well-intentioned, contained no balm for their wounds.

Out of the wreck of their broken hopes and shattered ideals, they set themselves slowly and painfully to build up a new movement on different lines. Hopeless as the task appeared to be, they succeeded so well that had England displayed not generosity but rudimentary common sense, the worst troubles of the next decade might have been avoided, and a system of government established which, however imperfect and inadequate, would at least have enabled Irishmen to devise their own solutions for their own problems.

If Isaac Butt is not wholly forgotten in the Ireland of to-day, he is remembered by the new generation only as a weak-kneed advocate of compromise who whittled down the national demand, and failed to secure even such miserable concessions as he put forward. Butt's movement, in my opinion, ought to be judged less as a contribution to Nationalism than as an experiment in constructive Unionism, somewhat akin to that which O'Connell initiated under the Melbourne Ministry. O'Connell indeed, like Parnell after him, while unreservedly accepting the British connection, accepted it as a necessity imposed upon Ireland. Butt was honestly convinced that even if the tie could be broken, Ireland and not England would be the heaviest sufferer. In the days when, as champion of the Irish Tories, he broke a lance with O'Connell in the famous Corporation debate of 1843, Butt believed that it was possible to compel Ireland to accept the Union; with wider experience he realized that there could be no stability in the

relations between the two countries until measures were adopted to meet the Irish people at least half-way.

The collapse of Fenianism gave Butt his opportunity. He had acted as counsel for the leaders in the State trials, and was the dominant figure in the amnesty movement which enlisted the sympathy and support of thousands who had strenuously opposed Stephens and his colleagues. Gladstone declared that Fenianism had taught him the intensity of Irish disaffection. "It taught me," said Butt, "more and better things. It taught me the depth, the breadth, the sincerity of that love of fatherland that misgovernment had tortured into disaffection, and misgovernment, driving men to despair, had exaggerated into revolt."

In Butt's opinion the revolutionary movement was hopeless, but he felt that a platform might be constructed which would have the support of men of all parties. He substituted for the demand of the Republican Brotherhood the scheme of an Irish Parliament which would possess, in the words of the resolution adopted at the first meeting of the new Home Government Association, "under a federal arrangement, the right of legislating for and regulating all matters relating to the internal affairs of Ireland, and control over Irish resources and revenues, subject to the obligation of contributing our just proportion of the Imperial expenditure." Though, naturally, Butt could not expect the active co-operation of the Fenians, he was given assurances that they would maintain

an attitude of benevolent neutrality. In his *Life of Parnell*, Barry O'Brien explains the point of view of one of the popular leaders with whom Butt conducted negotiations. "We felt," said this Fenian, "that we might have a long time to wait before we could put 20,000 or 30,000 men into the field to fight England; but we thought that by taking part in every political or semi-political movement that was going on we could exercise much influence, and mould these movements to our own ends. An Irish Parliament was certainly the next best thing to absolute separation, and many of us would be quite content to close the account on the basis of legislative independence."

Whilst Fenians, or at least Fenian sympathisers, constituted the left wing of Butt's Party, he rallied on his right a strong phalanx of Tory landlords. The majority of the founders of the Home Rule movement were Protestants and Conservatives, and had up till then been regarded as neck-or-nothing defenders of Ascendancy. Some of them in taking this step were inspired by no higher motive than resentment against the British Government for its action in disestablishing the Irish Church. In their view Gladstone's policy had abrogated the Act of Union, leaving Irish Protestants free to revise their position and make a new compact with their fellow-countrymen instead of with Great Britain. Others were purely place-beggars who saw in the movement a chance of raising the price for which they were willing to sell themselves to the Treasury

Bench; but not a few, like Butt himself, had been forced to the conclusion that the system of a Union Parliament could no longer be maintained, and that the real problem to be solved was, as one of them put it, "to harmonise those national aspirations in which we largely participate with that Imperial connection which we desire to retain."

That such a fusion of opposites should have been effected is a proof that Butt as a statesman lacked neither originality nor courage. Given a favourable opportunity he might have evolved a settlement which, if it could not have been final, would have enabled Irishmen to employ other than revolutionary methods in dealing with their problems by freeing them from the intervention of English politicians, to whom this country has been of value only as a pawn in the Whig and Tory game.

As it was, Butt was doomed to fight with all the odds against him. To the Cullenites he was tainted with the poison of Orangeism; to the Orangemen he was a traitor who had sold his birthright and betrayed his fellow Protestants for a mess of Vatican pottage. Though the country was on Butt's side, lack of funds prevented him from developing an adequate organisation. He was arrested for debt on the very day he was to open the first great Home Rule campaign in the General Election of 1874; and while he succeeded in carrying sixty seats—the Ballot Act enabling voters for the first time to declare their opinion without fear of eviction—the necessity of accepting candidates

who could pay their own way included in his ranks men upon whom little reliance could be placed. Yet when all is said, Butt's movement broke down, not through inability to reconcile divided opinions in Ireland, but through the refusal of English politicians of all parties to admit that the voice of Irish popular representatives should have any say in Irish measures. Liberals believed that they had finally closed the account in carrying Disestablishment and the Land Act; and treated the cry for a further instalment of land reform, much less for self-government, as an outrageous attempt to levy political blackmail. To Tories each new demand was a threat to the stability of the Empire, to be met not by concession but by coercion.

Butt clung to the belief that it was possible by reason and argument to induce Great Britain to deal fairly with Ireland. A. M. Sullivan, a distinguished member of Butt's party, shows how wide this belief was of the mark by compiling from the division lists of four sessions examples of measures supported by the overwhelming majority of Irish members, and rejected by a practically unanimous England. These bills—only a tenth of those which suffered a similar fate—did not aim at securing special privileges for Ireland, but were designed to obtain for this country rights already enjoyed by English municipalities and English voters. Mr. Sullivan's list, which I take from his book *New Ireland*, runs:—

"17th April, 1874.—Irish Municipal Franchise Bill—Irish vote: Ayes, 43; Noes, 14. Thrown out by 111 British votes.

18th June, 1874.—Municipal Privileges Bill—Irish vote: Ayes, 22; Noes, 9. Rejected by 66 British votes.

28th April, 1874.—Purchase of Irish Railways—Irish vote: Ayes, 45; Noes, 6. Defeated by 236 British votes.

23rd March, 1875.—Irish Municipal Corporations Bill—Irish vote: Ayes, 43; Noes, 18. Thrown out by 127 British votes.

1st March, 1875.—Irish Municipal Franchise Bill—Irish vote: Ayes, 41; Noes, 16. Flung out by 160 British votes.

22nd March, 1876—Irish Borough Franchise Bill—Irish vote: Ayes, 54; Noes, 6. Rejected by 209 British votes.

28th March, 1876.—Irish Borough Franchise Bill—Irish vote: Ayes, 41; Noes, 23. Rejected by 212 British votes.

8th July, 1875—Irish Lunatic Asylums Bill—Irish vote: Ayes, 28; Noes, 7. Rejected by 111 British votes.

2nd June, 1875.—Irish Land Bill—Irish vote: Ayes, 44; Noes, 22. Rejected by 279 British votes.

11th June, 1875.—Motion for Enquiry into the Working of the 1870 Land Act—Irish vote: Ayes, 30; Noes, 11. Rejected by 97 British votes.

30th June, 1875.—Grand Jury Reform Bill—Irish vote: Ayes, 32; Noes, 22. Thrown out by 160 British votes.

29th June, 1876.—Irish Land Bill—Irish vote: Ayes, 48; Noes, 33. Rejected by 257 British votes.

24th April, 1877.—Irish Land Bill—Irish votes: Ayes, 48; Noes, 24. Flung out by no less than 320 purely British votes."

While it was the essence of the Union system that English votes should decide the fate of Irish Bills, Biggar's discovery that Irish opposition could impede English measures provoked a burst of furious indignation which revealed to the world, if not to the people of Great Britain—who were in no mood to think of anything but the insult offered to the venerable traditions of Parliament—how little the rulers of Ireland believed in the principle of equality, which was, nominally at least, the central fact in the conception of a united kingdom. Biggar discovered the weapon of obstruction, but Parnell sharpened its edge, and by its agency brought about a revolution in parliamentary methods not unlike that of the submarine in naval warfare.

Butt, who had a superstitious reverence for the forms of the House of Commons, and sincerely believed that parliamentary battles could be gained by full-dress debates in which the attackers were outnumbered ten to one, was shocked by Parnell and Biggar's gospel of ruthlessness. In an evil moment for his own fame, he repudiated his

aggressive colleagues at the bidding of English Ministers. The Irish people sided with Parnell, as on Butt's own showing they were justified in doing.

In his *Plea for the Celtic Race*, published in 1866, Butt had written: "I am told that no matter how conclusively I prove that a certain measure is essential to the preservation of the Irish people —to the well-being of all classes in the Irish community—I am wrong in urging it, because there is no chance of the British Government, ever letting it become law. *Non meus hic sermo.* The argument is one that ought not to be used by any friend to English connection—by any person friendly to the existing order of things. To what does it inevitably lead? To this. The form of government to which such an argument can apply is one that ought not to exist for one hour, if it be possible for any exertion or sacrifice on the part of Irishmen to destroy it."

The experience of four sessions had amply demonstrated that, no matter how urgent were Ireland's needs, or how unanswerable the case for reform, the British Government would not deal with them, except Irish members by their exertions and sacrifices were able to apply compulsion. Parnell found the method by which a minority could exercise pressure on a majority of the House of Commons; and in a very short time the politicians, who had laughed to scorn Butt's demand for fixity of tenure, were drafting plans for a Land Act

which revolutionised the relations between Irish tenants and Irish owners.

It was one of the stock arguments against the fickle Irish that Butt was deposed from his leadership. But in sober fact it was the English who must bear responsibility for his overthrow. It was they who rejected Butt's compromise, as in the 'thirties they had rejected that of O'Connell, and left Nationalists once more free to widen the basis of their demand.

However disturbing obstruction might be to Whigs and Tories, who declared that Parnell's statements resembled those "you may hear from your partner in the quadrille if you have the good fortune to be a guest at the annual ball at Colney Hatch," and insisted that when Biggar rose to address the House, "a whiff of salt pork seems to float upon the gale, and the air is heavy with the odour of the kippered herring," the new parliamentary tactics would not of themselves have sufficed to bring down the walls of the Ascendancy Jericho. For that a great popular impetus in Ireland was needed, and this was provided by the three bad seasons which ended in the widespread distress of 1879.

The period between 1870 and 1876 had been marked by rising prices, which in Ireland, as always, had meant increased rents that were not reduced when the lean years came. Farmers, who had been lucky enough to obtain a measure of security under the Act of 1870, had been tempted to borrow heavily in the hope of improving their

position, and found themselves, once the potato crop failed, face to face with bankruptcy. But the majority of tenants, especially in the western counties, had been forced by landlords and agents to contract out of the benefits of the Act, and on these unfortunates notices to quit showered like snow-flakes.

In later years Unionists sought to cover up their own responsibility for the doom that had overtaken them by representing the Land League as a communist tyranny, imposed by a handful of designing agitators upon a people too lacking in moral fibre to reject doctrines which in their souls they abhorred. This fable will deceive only those who wish to be deceived. In plain fact, Ireland at the end of the 'seventies discovered that the thirty years which had elapsed since the Black 'Forties had provided her with no safeguards against famine in the event of a failure of the potato crop, except those which she could devise not in co-operation with but in defiance of the British Government.

In the three years of 1877, 1878, and 1879 the loss on the potato crop alone was officially estimated by the Registrar-General at over £9,000,000, and that on general crops at £26,000,000, or more than double the entire agricultural rents of Ireland. But landlords, with the object of evading an abatement of their rents, persisted in maintaining, and persuaded the Government to adopt their view, that no exceptional distress existed. In accordance with stereotyped landlord custom, as

the yield of potatoes diminished ejectments increased and multiplied. In the years 1879—80, according to returns furnished by Clerks of the Peace in Ireland, 16,626 processes of ejectment were entered at quarter sessions against tenants, menacing with eviction 83,130 persons. The increase in the entering of these notices during the distress years of 1879—80 was for all Ireland 87½ per cent. over the average for the previous twenty-five years.

How the cottiers, who had the good fortune not to be ejected, lived was related by Mr. Fox in his report to the Mansion House Committee on relief work in Mayo in 1880. "I do not believe," he says, "that tongue or pen, however eloquent, could truly depict the awful destitution of some of those hovels. The children are often nearly naked. Bedding there is none, everything of that kind having long since gone to the pawn-office, as proved to me by numerous tickets placed in my hands for inspection in well-nigh every hovel. A layer of old straw, covered by the dirty sacks which conveyed the seed potatoes and artificial manure in the spring, is the sole provision of thousands, with this exception, that little babies sleeping in wooden boxes are occasionally indulged with a bit of thin old flannel stitched on to the sacking. Men, women, and children sleep under a roof and within walls dripping with wet, while the floor is saturated with damp, not uncommonly oozing out of it in little pools. In one case I asked a gaunt, starved-looking man, whom I found literally

endeavouring to sleep away the hunger, where his little children slept. He pointed to a corner in a moist room in which I could see no sign of bedding. 'Do they wear their clothes at night?' 'No.' 'How then do they keep warm?' 'There is,' he replied with the most amazing simplicity and composure, 'a deal of warmth in children,' signifying that they obtained warmth by huddling together like little animals."

General Gordon, on the eve of his Khartoum adventure, visited the south-west of Ireland in 1880, in the hope, as he stated in the *Times*, "of discovering how some settlement could be made of the Irish question, which, like a fretting cancer, eats away our vitals as a nation." Though he did not claim to be a politician, Gordon divined what professional English politicians had not yet grasped a score of years later, that "half-measure Acts which left the landlords with any say to the peasantry would accentuate instead of eliminating the disease." In a sentence which, had it been taken to heart by those to whom it was addressed, might have saved the Irish tenant much and British Ministers still more, General Gordon warned the Cabinet that "any half-measures will only place the Government face to face with the people of Ireland as the champions of the landlord interest." "In conclusion," he adds, and no more damning verdict has been pronounced against the system upon which Parnell and Davitt had declared war, "I must say from all accounts, and my own observation, that the state of our fellow-

countrymen in the parts I have named is worse than that of any people in the world, let alone Europe. I believe that these people are made as we are, that they are patient beyond belief, loyal, but at the same time broken-spirited and desperate, living upon the verge of starvation in places in which we would not keep our cattle. I am not well off, but I would offer ——— or his agent £1000 if either of them would live one week in one of these poor devil's places and feed as these people do."

In England where the distress was infinitely lighter, abatements were made as a matter of course. But the first act of the principal Connacht landowners, once the shortage made itself felt, was to enter into a solemn compact to refuse even the miserable reduction of 10 per cent. claimed by tenants, whose crops were rotting in the ground. Their attitude was precisely that of their predecessors who had organised the great clearances thirty years before. Now as then, in the landlord view, the only share of the produce of his fields to which the peasant was entitled was as small a proportion of the potato crop as sufficed to keep body and soul together. If that crop failed, Government and private charity might intervene to save the tenant from starvation, but whatever was done or left undone, there must be no interference with rent.

Standing firmly on their legal right, the landowners substituted for abatements notices of ejectment, and called on the Executive to support their

policy of extermination by a Coercion Act which would enable them to mobilise behind their Crowbar Brigade the armed forces of the Crown. When at last the Government were forced to retract their statements and admit the reality of distress, they adopted the extraordinary course of relieving not the tenants but the landlords. In 1880 an Act was passed advancing £1,000,000 from the surplus funds of the Disestablished Church to landowners without interest for two years, and at the rate of 2 per cent. afterwards. The grant was given for the purpose of starting relief works. But it is conclusively proved that numbers of landlords used the money to improve their own properties, and then calmly proceeded to charge the tenants 5 per cent. in perpetuity upon these improvements. This shameless appropriation of public money was strictly in accordance with the precedent of 1847, and no one was more surprised than the landlords that it should move resentment or even provoke criticism.

In 1850 the *Times*, startled for a moment into sanity by the scandal of the Clearances, declared, in a phrase often attributed to Gladstone, that "the judgment of evictions is in many cases a judgment of death," and indicted Irish landlordism at the bar of public opinion. "If the proprietors of the soil," it wrote, "in maintaining the rights which the law has given them, thus recklessly inflict misery without stint upon the helpless and unfortunate peasantry; if they say that without the perpetuation of barbarities that would disgrace

a Turkish pasha their rents cannot be collected; if they are to bring in the attorney multiplying process, and with process multiplying costs, and reducing the peasantry to a hopeless slavery; and if they are then to convert the country into a battle-field for the landlords and process-servers, and sheriffs, and sheriffs' officers on the one side, and the furious peasantry and banded assassins on the other, then we say it is the bounden duty of the legislature boldly to interfere, and either to enforce upon the present landlords the duties, while it maintains the rights of property, or to create a new landed proprietary whose intelligence and wealth will enable them to secure the peace of society, and thus lay the sure foundations of national prosperity." What the *Times* vainly urged the British Government to do in 1850, the Land League set itself to accomplish thirty years later. Though the necessity of drastic reform was then at least equally great the *Times*, ironically enough, bayed loudest in the chorus of panic fright and savage denunciation which greeted the policy of Parnell and Davitt.

In his speech before the Parnell Commission, Michael Davitt told the judges that the conception of the Land League, evolved in his lonely broodings in a convict cell in Dartmoor, "represented the triumph of what was forgiving over what was revengeful in my Celtic temperament." "I felt then as now," he continued, "that a movement of such a nature would be a presentation of the Irish idea to Great Britain, and to the world, that would

place Ireland in her rightful position among civilised nations as the advocate, not for her own people alone, but for all peoples, of social justice and of the full rights of the labouring masses everywhere." Time has justified Davitt's hope. Doctrines which, when first promulgated, were assailed as the ravings of communards and terrorists, subversive of all law human and divine, have for a generation been plagiarised in detail by British politicians, Liberal and Conservative. There is not a piece of Irish remedial legislation since the 'eighties which does not owe its origin to the Nationalist leaders; yet the men who condemned them to plank beds for the crime of proposing these reforms, having borrowed their ideas, and invariably spoiled them in the borrowing, rank as constructive statesmen in proportion as they succeeded in giving legal form and force to the blasphemous heresies of the Land League.

In the early days of the movement there was little prospect of obtaining quarter from its adversaries, much less of converting them to the new creed. Landlordism felt the knife at its throat, and fought with the fury of despair against the doom that threatened it. Hitherto, it could always rely on weakening, if it did not eliminate, opposition by grudging concessions; but the principle laid down by Davitt challenged its existence as an institution. It is true that the League, while demanding the abolition of the existing system, offered terms which, compared with those enforced nearly a quarter of a century later by the British

Government, were not merely just but extravagantly generous. But owners at that time were not in the mood to listen to reason. They were fighting for privilege, and they were quick to see that the new crusade, unless it were promptly stifled, sealed the fate of their political as well as their territorial ascendancy.

Davitt had done what Fintan Lalor had planned to do. He laid the basis of a new social constitution, and at the same time employed the forces engaged in this task to give fresh impetus to the demand for self-government. Though to friends as well as foes the campaign seemed a forlorn hope, Davitt had many advantages denied to Lalor. Personally, he was a superb organiser, endowed with the power not only of firing the enthusiasm of his fellows but of directing that enthusiasm to concrete ends. Whether he was engaged in stiffening the courage of half-starved Mayo cottiers to refuse rack-rents, or persuading Fenian leaders to give land agitation a trial, his passionate sincerity and irresistible energy carried him triumphantly over all obstacles. Butt could reckon at the most only on Fenian neutrality, and not always on that; Parnell and Davitt secured the whole-hearted co-operation of the majority of professing Republicans, so that the New Departure, as it was called, constituted a national movement which, for the first time since the days of O'Connell, commanded the approval and support of all sections of Nationalists.

The upheaval in Ireland coincided with an

equally momentous upheaval in Parliament, and Parnell, with a tactical skill that baffled all the manœuvres of his opponents, used one movement to accentuate and reinforce the other. As the spark kindled in Mayo spread south and east in a raging tide of flame, and the smoke of its burning drifted so thickly through the House of Commons as to obscure all other issues, the sneering contempt with which its opponents had first assailed it gave way to hysterical frenzy.

The Land League agitation differed from previous agrarian movements. But the difference was not, as landlords insisted, and as they persuaded the Government to believe, that a few designing men had established a tyranny over the mass of the occupiers and forced them into courses which on their own account they would never have adopted. On the contrary, the strength of the movement lay in its popular appeal. In the days before Davitt had set the Mayo heather ablaze, Parnell, in the course of a conversation with Kickham, asked the old Fenian leader whether the people felt keenly on the land question. "Feel keenly on the land question?" replied Kickham. "I'm only sorry to say that I think they would go to hell for it." In former agrarian outbreaks feelings had been equally strong, but, thanks to Davitt's organising gifts, and still more to the growing sense of democratic consciousness in the country, emotion was not allowed to run to waste, and, instead of stray bodies of tenants fighting isolated battles against impossible odds, landlords

found themselves for the first time confronted with the massed strength of a national movement.

It was the realization of Fintan Lalor's scheme of unmuzzling the wolf-dog in every cabin; and, more important still, it fulfilled to the letter Lalor's command to draw the hostile force out of its entrenched position. "You must," he wrote, "disorganise and untrain and indiscipline that of the enemy, and not only must you *unsoldier*, you must *unofficer* it also; nullify its tactique and strategy as well as its discipline; decompose the science and system of war and resolve them into their first elements."

The solidarity of the Land League and the perfection of its discipline were shown in the ease with which it enforced its sanctions. In earlier agrarian combinations, the final argument was too often the tenant's blunderbuss; and once the appeal to physical force was made the landlord's cause, if not the individual landlord, had little reason to fear the result. Parnell taught his followers another and a better method. The howl of rage that greeted his injunction to place offenders against the Land League in a "moral Coventry" could not have been louder had he proposed a wholesale massacre of his opponents. But long before the name of boycotting was invented, the thing itself had been practised, and by no class more effectively than by the members of the Irish Ascendancy Party. Michael Davitt told the Parnell Commission that boycotting was a weapon borrowed from the landlord armoury; and amongst its classic

precedents, he quoted the programme formulated by *Blackwood's Magazine* to defeat the Reform Act of 1832 by withdrawing all Conservative business from tradesmen who did not support the Conservative candidates.

To-day boycotting is practised as a matter of course by masters and men in every industrial dispute, and, however much the beaten side may resent its application, no one any longer questions its legality. England of the 'eighties, which took it for granted that Irish mothers should ask no more for their children than a slab of yellow meal, and contemplated with equanimity the spectacle of families huddling in wayside ditches after their wretched cabins had been dismantled for failure to pay rack-rents, shuddered to the marrow of its bones as it read of boycotted landlords who were forced to groom their own horses, and of aristocratic ladies doomed to roughen their delicate hands in the labours of the kitchen and the dairy. Battalions of special correspondents dilated on the horrors of the *Jacquerie*, as they loved to describe it, and insisted that the remedy was to be found not in the tenants' "Three F's" of Fair Rent, Free Sale, and Fixity of Tenure, but in the landlords' "Three D's" of Disfranchisement, Disarmament, and a Dictator.

The Government rallied, as always, to the side of property. Gladstone recognised that a revision of the Land Acts was inevitable, but before undertaking this he sanctioned a double offensive which aimed at defeating obstruction in Parliament by

suspending the Nationalist members, and at overthrowing opposition in Ireland by employing the full rigour of coercion against "the gang of broken men and reckless boys," to whom, according to the Quaker Chief Secretary, W. E. Forster, all the trouble was due. The more tightly Forster packed the jails with the " suspects," whom he described as " village ruffians," the more fiercely raged the storm in Ireland, and the wind of it made havoc in Downing Street of the sheets upon which Gladstone was drafting his land proposals.

On this point, Barry O'Brien relates an incident which sums up the moral of Irish remedial legislation for over a century. After the second reading of the Land Bill of 1881, an Ulster Liberal was shown by Law, the Irish Attorney-General, his copy of the measure. "As he gave me the Bill," this Liberal told O'Brien, Law said: " Do you see that?" pointing to a figure—I think it was 22—on the Bill. I said " Yes, what does it mean?" " It means," he replied, " that that is the twenty-second Bill which has been before us." " And Law," I asked, " what was the first Bill like?" "Well may you ask," he said with a smile. "And then I learned," the narrator continued, " this moral lesson from my conversation with Law: that the first Land Bill was an insignificant amendment of the Land Act of 1870, but that as lawlessness and outrage increased in Ireland the Bill was broadened until it reached its final dimensions."

The Bill, when at last it became law, though it did not meet the full demands of the League,

revolutionised the existing system of land tenure. No more could the owner assert the right to do what he liked with his own in defiance of public opinion, which lay at the root of the worst of Irish discontents. From an autocrat he became an annuitant, whose share in the profits of his estate was strictly apportioned by a court of equity. The status of the tenant, on the other hand, was raised from that of serf, in practically everything but name, to that of partner; and while much hard fighting remained before victory was finally won, the key position had been carried, and henceforward their opponents had to reckon with "a peasantry rooted," in Lalor's phrase, "like rocks in the soil."

Chapter VIII.

LAND AND LIBERTY.

The acutest criticism of Liberal legislation in Ireland before Gladstone's conversion to Home Rule came from the lips of Lord Salisbury. In the words of the Tory leader, the net effect of the Land Acts and the Ballot Act had been to shatter the power of the landed gentry through whose influence and action administration had hitherto been carried on; and he saw his rival confronted with "the formidable problem of a country deprived of a system of government under which it had existed for many generations, and absolutely without even a sketch of a substitute by which the ordinary functions of law and order can be maintained." Gladstone at this time seems to have imagined that the Irish people, in gratitude for his reforms, would desert Nationalism for the Liberal faith; and he habitually talked as if it were his mission not merely to free the tenants from landlord exactions, but to save them from what he did not hesitate to describe as the "anarchial oppression" of their chosen leaders.

Nothing better reveals Gladstone's curious blindness at this period to the realities of the Irish situation than his conflict with Parnell over the

Act of 1881. He had been constrained to admit that events had shown he was wrong and the Nationalist leaders right in their view of the terms of the 1870 measure; but he insisted all the more vehemently that his new scheme was flawless, and that criticism of it could spring only from a desire "to march," as he put it in a phrase destined later to be blazoned on Unionist banners, "through ruin and rapine to the dismemberment of the Empire."

Parnell's decision to test the value of the rent-fixing clauses of the Act by presenting selected cases to the new land courts, and his order that no member of the Land League should apply to the courts until these cases had been heard, were interpreted by Gladstone as treason to the State. "He desires," so the Prime Minister declared in a famous speech at Leeds, "to arrest the operation of the Land Act; to stand as Moses stood between the living and the dead; to stand there not as Moses stood, to arrest, but to spread the plague." In a passage which English Liberals and Tories united to acclaim, Gladstone announced that "if the law purged from defect and from any taint of injustice is still to be repelled and refused, and the first conditions of political society to remain unfulfilled, then I say, gentlemen, without hesitation, the resources of civilisation against its enemies are not yet exhausted."

With Gladstone the "resources of civilisation" were not limited to the truncheons of the constabulary and the Jeddart justice of Forster's "remov-

able" magistrates. Several Catholic bishops who still adhered to the Cullen tradition had denounced Parnell's campaign, and, in particular, Dr. M'Cabe, Archbishop of Dublin, attacked the Ladies' Land League as " a dishonouring attempt, under the flimsy pretext of charity, to lay aside the modesty of the daughters of Ireland." Gladstone hailed these prelates as heaven-sent allies, and, going farther, endeavoured through Cardinal Newman to enlist on his side what, in his tract on the *Vatican Decrees*, he had described as " the baleful power which is expressed by the phrase *Curia Romana*." Newman politely declined to urge Rome to silence priests who preferred the law of the League to Castle coercion, and reminded the Prime Minister that "the myrmidons of the Apostolic Chamber," to quote the *Vatican Decrees*, " while absolute in questions of theology, were not absolute in political and social matters." Later, at the instigation of Mr. Gladstone's Government, a papal rescript was issued condemning the national tribute to Parnell and forbidding the clergy to collect subscriptions or countenance the scheme. The result was that the fund, which up till then had been hanging fire, doubled and trebled itself inside a few months until it reached the total of £37,000.

Before he made his despairing appeal to Newman, Gladstone, indignant at Parnell's refusal to accept the Land Act as a final triumph of constructive statesmanship, had given Forster his head; and the Irish leader, together with most of his

colleagues, was interned in Kilmainham Jail. It gives the measure of Gladstone's ignorance of the facts of the Irish situation at this time that, while he was exhausting all the resources of his rhetoric in condemnation of Parnell for attacking the Land Act, Parnell was fighting an uphill battle inside his own party to secure at least a trial for the Act.

In his *Recollections,* Mr. William O'Brien relates a conversation with his leader—a few days before Parnell's arrest—which, had he heard it, would have considerably enlightened Gladstone. "This Act," said Parnell, "won't settle the (land) question. Of course it won't. It proposes to unsettle it every fifteen years whether we like it or no. But so far as it works it can only help the farmers. It will bankrupt one-third of the landlords, which is more than any No Rent campaign of ours could do, and it will make the rest only too happy to be purchased out as an escape from the lawyers. It does not abolish Landlordism, but it will make Landlordism intolerable for the landlords. . . . If we had rejected this Bill the farmers of Ireland would very properly have chased us out of the country. If we were not to make the best of it now, the only effect would be that it would be used in spite of us, but that the landlords would get off with half the reductions we can, with judicious handling, knock out of these Land Commissioners."

Parnell's prophecies proved true in every detail. Amendments and reforms even more drastic than those which he demanded were adopted by succes-

sive Cabinets, Tory as well as Liberal, as part of their Irish programme. But whereas the Land League plan, had it been accepted, would have ensured a final settlement in the 'eighties on infinitely more advantageous terms to the landlords, British Ministries botched and muddled the question for another quarter of a century with disastrous results not only to the interests of Irish tenants and owners alike but to their own prestige.

"The golden secret of Irish Government," in Lord Morley's pungent words, "was always to begin by trying to find all possible points for disagreement with anything Mr. Parnell said or proposed, instead of seeking whether what he said or proposed would not furnish a basis for agreement." In the Kilmainham Treaty Gladstone for the first time reversed this process. He flung over Forster in favour of Parnell, and in return for an understanding that the agitation would be slowed down, agreed to withdraw coercion, to consider sympathetically the case for amending the Land Act, and to effect a settlement of the arrears question, so that tenants, who owed money to their landlords, should obtain the benefit of the Act by compounding for their debt. But the murder of Lord Frederick Cavendish and Burke by the Invincibles in May, 1882, scared Gladstone out of the paths of statesmanship. He realized, as Lord Morley tells us, that Parnell was "sincerely anxious for the pacification of Ireland," but to placate English feelings coercion instead of being withdrawn was intensified.

The landlords believed that their star was again in the ascendant, and under cover of the coercion régime began a new and still more savage eviction campaign with the object of nullifying the Land Act. A Land Corporation, composed of a syndicate of wealthy proprietors, was formed to "disinfect," in the words of its prospectus, districts where Land League doctrines had taken strongest hold, "to clear them of their Land League inhabitants," and to "plant them with loyal tenants from other counties." It was the old Cromwellian specific which in every Irish crisis has been the favourite remedy of the Ascendancy for Irish discontents.

Sir George Trevelyan, who succeeded Forster as Chief Secretary, protested that landlords were "insisting on asserting their rights in a cruel and unpatriotic manner." This mild remonstrance so far from causing a change of tactics produced a frantic outburst in the Orange *Evening Mail* against "the cowardly and crime-inciting language of the Chief Secretary for Ireland in regard to the conduct of Irish landlords." Fortunately, the country had something better to rely on than the timid appeal of the Chief Secretary to the humanity of the exterminators. It brought to naught the efforts of the Land Corporation by the strength of its organisation, and by the determination with which the tenants obeyed in spirit and in letter Parnell's command to keep a firm grip of their homesteads.

Gladstone allowed coercion to drag wearily on,

less, I believe, because he imagined it would prove effective, than because he hesitated to face squarely and honestly the facts of the Irish question. In the long run, indeed, it was the Tories who forced his hand. They were even less inclined than he was to devise an Irish settlement, but they were not averse from using Irish votes to dish the Liberals and secure their own return to the Treasury Bench. In power both English parties dilated on the unpardonable iniquity of rivals who would stoop to win victory by the aid of the Nationalist vote; in opposition Liberals and Conservatives practised every conceivable manœuvre to capture this vote. As Lord Morley said as far back as 1885:—"When it suits their own purpose the two English parties will unite to baffle or to crush the Irish, but neither of them will ever scruple to use the Irish in order to baffle or to crush their own rivals."

The Tories, whose complaint had hitherto been that Gladstone had been dosing Ireland with milk and water when her condition required unstinted blood and iron, suddenly discovered that coercion was no remedy. To the horror of the landlords, they declined to take part in the campaign to exclude Ireland from the benefits of the Franchise Act of 1885 which for the first time placed Irish voters on an equality with those of Great Britain. In a letter to the *Times*, not long before, Lord Salisbury had charged a Liberal candidate with selling the integrity of his country by urging that there should be equal treatment for Ireland. "You

not only proposed household suffrage in the Irish counties," the Tory leader wrote, "but you also promised to grant to Ireland everything you would grant to England. This will include a plan of elective local government as extensive as that to be proposed for England—a measure involving that more extended self-government which Lord Hartington has denounced as madness." Lord Salisbury had no qualms about "selling the integrity of his country" when it was a question of securing the return of his party to power; and colleagues, like W. H. Smith, who had solemnly declared that an extension of the suffrage in Ireland would result in "confiscation of property, ruin of industry, withdrawal of capital—misery, wretchedness, and war," cheerfully faced these risks for the satisfaction of smiting the Gladstonians hip and thigh.

The landlords, who had been riding triumphantly on the crest of the wave, felt their craft sinking under their feet. In vain did they utter warnings in parliament that the new franchise, as Mr. Plunkett put it, "would precipitate the establishment of an Irish nationality," and that they were really concerned, not for their own ascendancy, but for the preservation of British authority, which in turn depended upon the denial of democratic rights to the mass of the Irish people. Outside parliament stronger language was used; and it was hinted not obscurely that more formidable weapons than words would be employed before the controversy closed. Borrowing a leaf from Par-

nell's book, the Irish Tories decided that in future they would act independently of both English Parties.

The best comment on this experiment is to be found in a letter from Dr. Galbraith, Senior Fellow of Trinity College, to Sir Charles Gavan Duffy. "The Protestant gentry of Ireland," he said, "are as blind to the future as ever they were. They stand on the brink of a precipice, and don't seem to be aware of it. . . . A handful of them met in a back parlour in London to found an 'Independent Irish Conservative Party,' bless the mark! One hundred and three years ago they met in College Green with colours flying, drums beating, and cannon loaded to demand and insist on their rights. Alas! how changed! I see no hope for them unless God works a miracle."

As was to be expected, neither of the Front Benches was perturbed by this threat of independent action. To British statesmen of all parties the lightest word of Parnell counted more than the loudest rhetoric of his Irish opponents. English Tories, undeterred by the frantic protests of the Londonderrys, Hamiltons, and Beresfords, not only accepted the extension of the suffrage and consented to hold office at the mercy of the Nationalists, but actually denounced the whole policy of coercion as futile and exasperating, and through their Viceroy, Lord Carnarvon, opened up secret negotiations with Parnell for a settlement on the basis of a self-governing Ireland.

The election of 1885 exploded utterly the absur

fiction that Unionist landlords, not Nationalist leaders, were the true interpreters of the will of the Irish people. For the last time a general attack was delivered by the Tory forces to break Parnell's strength in the Irish constituencies. The result was perhaps the most amazing collapse in electoral history. Out of eighty-nine contests Parnell won eighty-five, and fifty of these were carried by majorities ranging from 6,500 in the highest to 2,400 in the lowest. In one Kerry division the landlord candidate was beaten by a hundred to one; and in North and South Mayo, as against 10,000 polled for the Nationalists the Tories could muster only a bare 300. Though a third of a century has elapsed since that defeat, Unionists have never again tried their luck south of the Boyne; and the Irish people have fought to a finish controversies as bitter as those that followed the Parnell Split and the rise of the Sinn Fein movement without any fear of the opponents of self-government reaping electoral profits from their divisions.

Quite as disturbing to British politicians was the effect of the Irish vote in English and Scottish constituencies. As Mr. Gladstone said, the electoral accent of Great Britain was tinged strongly with the Irish brogue; and the discipline and determination of the Irish voters came as a revelation to Whig and Tory party-managers. Parnell had, by what Lord Morley describes as "a supreme electoral demonstration never surpassed in any country," made good his prediction on the

eve of the contest, "if we cannot rule ourselves we can at least cause England to be ruled as we choose."

Parnell had directed that the Irish vote in Great Britain should be cast for the Tory candidates. This decision was adopted as a protest against Liberal coercion, and also because Salisbury at this time had made a bigger advance towards Home Rule than his rival. The result of the elections, however, destroyed Tory hopes of retaining office. Even with the support of the full Nationalist vote they would have been in a minority; whereas Gladstone, could he rally Parnell to his side and prevent divisions in the ranks of his own followers, should command a working majority. The signal was promptly given by Salisbury for a retreat into the old entrenchments of racial hate and sectarian prejudice; and the men who had lately been proclaiming the futility of force as a remedy raised louder than ever the demand for coercion to cow the unspeakable Irish. Parnell met this change of front by making public the facts of the Carnarvon negotiations. Tory Ministers, after flatly denying that any discussions of the kind had taken place, endeavoured to cover up the exposure of their intrigues by well-simulated horror at the unscrupulousness of the Nationalist leader. It was a breach of honour for Parnell to disclose the double-dealing, but the double-dealing in itself was wholly honourable. As events were speedily to show, these high-minded politicians could also reconcile it with their sensitive consciences to enlist forgers

and blackmailers as coadjutors in the holy task of overthrowing Irish Nationalism.

The Liberals, on their part, had no difficulty in divining the moral of the elections. Gladstone had appealed for a majority independent of the Nationalist vote to enable him to deal with the Irish question. Parnell, who had a very shrewd idea that a settlement devised by the aid of such a majority would be no settlement from the Irish point of view, managed to baulk this hope by throwing his weight into the Tory scales. The result was that Gladstone, after some weeks of painful meditation, came to the conclusion that a Government which held power by Irish votes was not on that account debarred from attempting to solve Irish problems.

Gladstone's conversion was perfectly sincere. The most persuasive of Victorian statesmen, his arguments appealed with even greater force to himself than to the legion of admirers for whom his word was law. Up to this, though he recognised the gravity of the question, Ireland had been rather a side-issue; now it became a sacred crusade. He saw that after the election of 1885 the argument could no longer hold that English statesmen were the true interpreters of the will of the Irish people. Ireland, rightly or wrongly, had chosen her path; and a refusal to permit her to walk in it could be justified only by a rejection of the whole theory of democracy. This Gladstone declined to do; and instead of replacing the idol of coercion on its altar he set himself to evolve a new treaty of peace

and reconciliation between the two islands. But his hold over his followers was no longer what it had been even six years before, when it was said that if he had asked the House to pass the *Koran* or the *Nautical Almanac* as an Irish Bill he would have met with no difficulty.

The mass of the Liberals accepted the Land Act, knowing little and caring even less about it; Home Rule, however, raised issues which touched them more closely. To the aristocratic wing of the party democracy was a name no less baleful than it was to the stoutest Tory; and the first effect of Gladstone's declaration that the capture of eighty-five out of one hundred and three Irish seats made it desirable to inquire into the possibility of establishing a legislative body to deal with Irish affairs, was to convince this section that Liberalism was no longer a creed which they could profess with safety to themselves.

With the Whig nobles went also the leader of the advanced Radicals, whose revolutionary gospel had been only a little less abhorrent to the Hartingtons and Argylls than the policy of Parnell. Fierce as were the speeches of the Land Leaguers, they contain no more sweeping or bitter indictment of Castle rule than that formulated by Joseph Chamberlain in an address at Warrington in 1885. "I do not believe," said Chamberlain, "that the great majority of Englishmen have the slightest conception of the system under which this free nation attempts to rule a sister country. It is a system which is founded on the bayonets of

30,000 soldiers encamped permanently as in a hostile country. It is a system as completely centralized and bureaucratic as that with which Russia governs Poland, or as that which was common in Venice under Austrian rule. An Irishman at this moment cannot move a step; he cannot lift a finger in any parochial, municipal, or educational work, without being confronted, interfered with, controlled by an English official, appointed by a foreign government, and without a shadow or share of representative authority. I say the time has come to reform altogether the absurd and irritating anachronism which is known as Dublin Castle—to sweep away altogether these alien boards of foreign officials, and to substitute for them a genuine Irish Administration for purely Irish business."

It is an illuminating commentary on the sincerity of British politicians that the man who held these views, and who also declared that "if the object of the Government were to paralyse local effort, to annihilate local responsibility, and daily to give emphasis to the fact that the whole country is under the dominion of an alien race, no system could be devised more likely to secure its object than that now in force in Ireland," should have devoted the rest of his life to strengthening the defences of this system and aiding its legionaries to repel all attacks upon their citadel. Thirty-five years have passed since Chamberlain pronounced the death-sentence on Dublin Castle, but, though he is no more than a name to the new generation,

the "absurd and irritating anachronism" exercises to-day a more despotic and maleficent control over the lives and fortunes of Irishmen than when he poured out the vials of his wrath against it, and exercises this control largely as a result of his championship.

Chamberlain allied himself to the forces of reaction, less because he differed from Gladstone on the principle of an Irish settlement, than because he disliked his leader's plan. Not a few Liberals who denounced Chamberlain as a traitor disliked not only the plan but the principle of an Irish settlement, and consented to support it, only because they felt that their party could not hope to triumph save by following Gladstone's star. It is difficult to discover any store of passionate idealism or of profound conviction amongst the majority of English politicians who took sides on the question of Irish self-government.

The Tories, who proclaimed the Act of Union the Ark of the Covenant, were themselves within a few short years to lay sacrilegious hands upon their fetish by conceding a measure of local government which the Prime Minister, by whom it was introduced, had declared to be "worse than Home Rule." The pith of the Tory argument was that Unionism and landlordism stood or fell together, yet it was a Tory Government that undertook the task of buying out the landlords.

On the Liberal side, after the disappearance of Gladstone from the scene, the idea of a holy war in favour of Home Rule found few supporters,

even amongst those who had sworn most vehemently to redeem their pledges. The vision of a people rightly struggling to be free was supplanted by the theory of the "predominant partner," whose veto was final not by reason of his right but of his might. Until the balance of power was once more in Nationalist hands, English Liberal politicians, though they blessed Home Rule as an abstract proposition and lauded themselves for their superior virtue in doing so, abstained as rigidly as the most hardened Tory from taking any steps to give practical effect to their professions. They had tears and to spare for the hard lot of Naboth, but they laboured none the less strenuously to ensure to Ahab the secure enjoyment of the fruits of the vineyard. It is not necessary to impute to these politicians a double dose of Machiavellianism. If they are to be arraigned, the real crime against them is less that of sinister treachery to the Irish people, than of inability to discern that by evading on party grounds the necessity of placing the relations between the two nations on a new basis they were wilfully endangering not merely Irish but British interests.

Paradoxically enough, it was the Nationalist leaders who saw most clearly the importance of Irish self-government from the British point of view. It would be absurd to say that Parnell and his followers were concerned about British interests. They never professed to be; and their aim throughout was to secure the largest possible measure of concessions, leaving to English states-

men, who might be trusted not to overlook this duty, the business of adjusting these concessions so as to safeguard British rights and claims. Parnell would have fought no less vigorously to secure self-government, had he believed that the granting of it entailed the downfall of the British Empire. Freedom to shape her own destinies was vital to Ireland, and this was, in his opinion, the only consideration that ought to weigh with Irishmen. But he also held that Irish freedom would prove in practice no less beneficial to England, and he insisted that the best guarantee British Ministers could have against separation would be, as he said, "the knowledge of the Irish people that it is in their power by constitutional means to make the laws which they are called upon to obey just and equitable."

There is no doubt that Parnell was absolutely sincere in his declaration that he accepted the first Home Rule Bill as a final settlement, and also in his statement on oath to the Parnell Commission. "I have never gone further, either in my thought or action, than the restitution of the legislative independence of Ireland." Had the settlement he accepted become an accomplished fact, Parnell's efforts and energies would have been directed towards making it an enduring treaty of peace. In this sense he was, like O'Connell, Butt, and Redmond, a Unionist in the true meaning of the word. His opponents, who claimed the title, strove for a continuance of a system, under which, as they frankly admitted, there was no hope of reconcilia-

tion between the two nations; Parnell contended that the breaking of legal fetters would establish for the first time friendly relations between the peoples.

This is not to say that Parnell, were he alive to-day, would stand where he stood in the 'eighties. He was fond of reminding opponents of the closeness of the parallel between the history of Irish land legislation and the fable of the Sibylline books, and the same parallel held good of the demand for self-government. England could have clenched a bargain on easier terms with O'Connell than with Parnell, and the fact that Gladstone was twice permitted to fail has ensured that Gladstone's successors must pay a higher price for a settlement.

"No man," said Parnell, "can set bounds to the march of a nation," and Ireland has been marching since his bones were laid in Glasnevin. But England has also been marching. And if Ireland's demands to-day are more far-reaching than they were a generation ago, this is simply because she takes her stand on English declarations of the fundamental rights of small peoples held against their will in the grip of a stronger neighbour. There may be many in Ireland who would accept less to close the score; but the most extreme Republican, whose claim Downing Street dismisses as insanity, is, after British acceptance of the Fourteen Points, really formulating a policy which, in addition to being strictly moderate, cannot be attacked like that of Parnell as an innovation wholly irreconcilable with the theory and

practice of Victorian statesmanship. Critics of the first Home Rule Bills found that their strongest argument, with British electors at least, was to denounce the Gladstonian proposals as "a leap in the dark," a phrase adopted by Professor Dicey for the title of a book in which with a great parade of erudition he disposed of the scheme as an experiment without precedent. But modern precedents are all on the other side; and the overwhelming majority of them have been created by the very statesmen who were, and are, the bitterest opponents of Irish self-government. From the Baltic to the Persian Gulf their voices have been heard proclaiming the right of nations, small as well as great, to shape their destinies in accordance with their own needs, and not, as heretofore, in meek submission to the will of their overlords.

Even in the 'eighties the strongest precedents favoured the Nationalists, and all the special pleading of their opponents could not obscure the fact. Parnell cared as much, or as little, for the British Empire as he did for England; but just as he was in practice a better Unionist than the Unionists, so he was a better Imperialist. It was a matter of indifference to him whether his line of action clashed or harmonised with that adopted by Canadian or Australian politicians in their efforts to free themselves from the strangle-hold of Downing Street; but he was too keen a politician not to recognise the tactical value of the colonial argument.

As Gavan Duffy pointed out at the time:—

"Nothing that the blackest pessimist predicted of the danger of entrusting Ireland with the management of her own affairs was more offensive or alarmist than the vaticinations of colonial officials half a century ago on the perils of entrusting colonials with political power." And every manifestation of Irish discontent which Unionists insisted justified the refusal of self-governing powers, had its parallel in the history of Canada and Australia, where it had been used for the same purpose of denying freedom. "You have got another Ireland growing up in every colony you possess," Peel warned his countrymen in the 'forties. Fortunately for themselves, they heeded the warning in spite of the clamour of Tories which greeted the announcement of concessions to Canada with the cry 'British America is lost.'" But the average Englishman of a generation ago knew little and cared less about colonial history. In his mind the typical Empire-builder was the predatory soldier of the type of Clive, and for every hundred Englishmen who gloried in Plassey it would have been hard to find one who had even heard of the Durham Report. Consequently, it was anything but difficult to foster the belief amongst the rank and file of British voters that Nationalist leaders, who appealed to colonial precedents, were like Satan quoting scripture for his own purposes.

A negative attitude, however, did not suffice to meet the needs of the situation on the Unionist side. It was essential to evolve something that might at least pass for constructive philosophy;

and this was found in a new conception of Imperialism. Colonel Saunderson used to claim that Imperialism was born in Ireland, but as a matter of fact the creed owes its origin largely to the scramble for Africa which was now beginning in earnest; and, as was said of British intervention in Egypt, not the least sordid episode in an unsavoury story, "the trail of finance was over it all." If the original impetus came from other quarters, the forces whose existence depended on defeating national aspirations in Ireland saw in the new gospel a weapon by the aid of which they might regain all that had been lost. Lord Salisbury, striking while the iron was hot, linked the Irish with the Hottentots as a race "incapable of self-government," and discovered that the function of Parliament was to give the Government of England a free hand to dominate Ireland. "Apply that recipe," he said, "honestly, consistently, and resolutely for twenty years, and at the end of that time you will find that Ireland will be fit to accept any gifts in the way of local government or repeal of coercion laws that you may wish to give her." Chief Secretaries, who in reality danced obediently as Dublin Castle officialdom pulled the strings, began now to pose as strong and stern pro-consuls; and by a still more grotesque process of transformation landlords, who had fired the Irish people with a determination to break the English connection by using their autocratic powers to develop a ruthless policy of rack-renting and eviction, boasted themselves, and were hailed by others, as

self-sacrificing idealists who had kept the flag flying not for their own purposes or profit but in a spirit of simple and passionate loyalty to the great Imperial tradition.

If the Irish Ascendancy were quick to see that their salvation lay in persuading the British people to "think imperially," the devotees who proclaimed the Anglo-Saxon race predestined rulers of the "lesser breeds without the law," and planned on paper and in platform-speeches a strictly disciplined Empire whose members should no longer march as they pleased and where they pleased, discerned no less clearly that the Irish claims must be rejected if their scheme were to have any chance of success. Mr. Kipling, the inspired bard of the new crusade, summed up the deepest convictions of his fellows in this characteristic reference in the *Song of the English* to the glorious opportunity opened up by the defeat of Gladstone and the Irish:

> "From the whine of a dying man,
> From the snarl of a wolf-pack freed,
> Turn for the world is thine,
> Mother, be proud of thy Breed."

Chamberlainite Imperialism was destined, however, to enjoy no long spell of triumph. From the Irish Ascendancy point of view it could hardly be improved upon as an instrument for securing the perpetual coercion of unarmed Nationalists; but when it addressed itself to the dragooning of armed

Boers in order to win for the mining magnates of Johannesburg a dominance akin to that of the Irish landlords, the whole crazy structure tumbled into ruin. Not the least ironical result of the South African adventure was that the colonies, whose aid the Imperialists had piteously invoked to break the strength of the Boer Republics, secured as a price of their services in the field a new status wholly at variance with prevailing theories of Imperialism. The Transvaal was to be subdued as a proof that "Nationalism" was doomed to disappear. The first effect of its submergence, however, was to sharpen the sense of "Nationalism" amongst the self-governing peoples of the Empire, and impel them to insist that they should henceforth be treated as the equals and not the dependents of Great Britain. Irish Nationalists pointed the moral with accuracy and eloquence, but the Imperialists, though they were forced, sorely against their will, to admit the principle of South Africa for the Africanders, had still the power to nullify the claim of Ireland for the Irish.

Chapter IX.

ASCENDANCY IN THE DITCH.

The leaders of Irish Unionism did not put all their eggs into the Imperialist basket. Deep as was their horror of the domination of the many-headed multitude, they discovered that though democracy might still be deprived of real power, its voice was certain to become steadily more insistent, and they came to the conclusion that they too should pose as its spokesmen. But the only force bearing any resemblance to a democracy which could be induced to accept Ascendancy leadership, was that of Northern Orangeism. In the past it had been taken for granted that the chief political function of the Lodges was to act as a sort of praetorian guard in the service of reactionary landlordism. It was with this object that Colonel Saunderson had set himself early in the 'eighties to galvanise the Orange Institution into new life. So long as Ireland had been governed solely in the landlord interest Saunderson, like other members of his class, was not greatly impressed by the special aims and objects dear to the hearts of the "brethren." In the debate on the Party Processions Act he had openly scoffed at his future followers as people whose mania it was "to beat drums to frighten the Papists."

When Parnell and Davitt entered the lists with the avowed purpose of smashing landlordism, and appealed to Protestant farmers to lend a helping hand, the champions of Ascendancy discovered that it was essential to stifle their scruples about beating the drum, and that safety lay in banging it harder than it had ever been banged before. Saunderson announced his conversion by appearing in an Orange sash at a meeting at Ballykilbeg in 1882, where he declared that he had entered the ranks because the Orange organisation was alone capable of dealing with the condition of anarchy and rebellion which prevailed in Ireland. But he had no answer to make to the Land League manifesto to Ulster which pointed out that the measure of the affection of Protestant landlords for Protestant tenants was to be found in the fact that inside a generation the emigrants from Ulster numbered over 732,000, and that during the same period the number of holdings in the province of fifteen acres and less had decreased by 104,000. Saunderson's only argument was that the expropriation of the landlords would prove a prelude to the general extirpation of Protestants of all classes, a line of reasoning which ignored altogether the fact that the landlords had already on their own account carried the policy of rooting out Protestant tenants a good deal more than half-way towards success.

Saunderson, like other Orange leaders, troubled little about logic if he could inflame passion. And the surest way to do this was to obscure the

economic issue by kindling the fires of a Jehad. Anticipating Sir Edward Carson, he hoisted the war standard at Ballykilbeg; and while denouncing the Land League as rebellious, proceeded to better its practice on his own account. "His opinion," he said, "was that the Orange Society should be made a disciplined body. In Cavan the Orangemen as a rule were armed, but they did not know how to use their arms, and they should be taught to do so. The first thing to do was to adopt a uniform, because without a uniform they could not manifest to the world at large that they were ready to take the field in case they were wanted. He admitted at once there were difficulties in the way because at all hazards they must strictly keep within the law. . . . As to the colour of the uniform, the principal colours of the Orange institution were orange, blue, purple, and black, and if these were mixed together it would be found that they formed grey. Now, grey was the colour of Irish frieze, and they could not get a more appropriate, serviceable uniform than that. . . . If England, in a moment of infatuation, determined to establish Home Rule, they would take up arms and ask the reason why."

Had Parnell proposed to take up arms to restore the Irish Parliament, the declaration would have been received by members of both English parties in a very different spirit from that with which they greeted Saunderson's declaration of his intention to resist the repeal of the Union by levying rebellion against the British Crown and Parliament.

What was at the worst an amiable indiscretion in the Orangeman would in the Nationalist have been treason-felony to be punished with the utmost rigour of the law. Even before Gladstone was converted to Home Rule Saunderson announced that the Orange Lodges had been organised to offer armed resistance to any scheme to which they objected, and boasted that they "could concentrate 50,000 men on any given point in Ulster at the very shortest possible notice." He enlisted many English fire-eaters, largely ex-army officers, as prospective recruits, and though he did not stage a gun-running drama in the spectacular fashion of the Larne exploit, the price lists and correspondence from foreign armament manufacturers which his biographer found amongst his papers indicate that he was prepared to go as far as Sir Edward Carson himself.

Tory statesmen, who saw in every threatening letter received by a land-agent a fresh proof of the collapse of the social order in Ireland, had not condemnation but applause for Orange incitements to armed violence. Lord Salisbury graciously gave his blessing; and Lord Randolph Churchill, crossing in person to Belfast, announced that "Ulster will fight and Ulster will be right," and thrilled the heart of every Orangeman by adapting Thomas Campbell's lines to read:—

> "Wave Ulster all thy banners wave,
> And charge with all thy chivalry."

There was no half-heartedness about the response. The chivalry of Ulster charged to such effect that Catholics were expelled from the mills and factories, and a couple of them drowned in Belfast Harbour as a warning to the others. It was discovered that the constabulary, who had been heroes so long as they were batoning Land Leaguers, were really Fenians masquerading in British uniform. Several of them were shot dead by indignant Protestants, scores of others were maimed for life, and Belfast was for months in a state of siege. Yet while the forces of the Crown were in the thick of the desperate struggle, Saunderson, the arch-loyalist and champion of law and order, was writing in his private diary as a prelude to a speech defending the rioters: "I feel confident God is with me, and that He will give me the stone of David which will bring the giant crashing to the ground."

Naturally, the landlords were delighted at this Orange upheaval which seemed to give them mastery over a body of legionaries no less formidable than the shock-troops of the Land League. With the defeat of the first Home Rule Bill it looked indeed as if it were to be for them "roses roses all the way." The Nationalists, it is true, still kept the field with unbroken ranks, but a wedge had been driven into the Gladstonian phalanx, and a compact mass of his followers led by his most capable lieutenants had deserted his flag to take service with the enemy. The British electorate had endorsed the Unionist claim, and applauded

Ulster's determination to fight; and Salisbury, having received his mandate, was preparing to despatch Mr. Balfour to Ireland to give effect to the policy of twenty years of resolute government.

Never had reaction appeared so triumphant or so justified in raising its voice in exultant hosannas. Yet those who looked deeper than the surface saw developments maturing that promised to upset some optimistic calculations. The Protestant workers of the north, and still more the Protestant farmers, though unyielding in their hostility to Home Rule, opposed it for other reasons than those that bulked largest in the eyes of their southern allies. To the Orange mind majority rule, when the majority happened to be Nationalists, was intolerable, but their ideal of government by minorities took another form than a recognition of the divine right of landlordism to dominate all other interests in the community. For tactical reasons the Northern Protestants were willing to allow landlords to lead; but it soon became evident that fiercely as they barked at the word of command they could not be relied on to bite when nothing more was at stake than issues which concerned only the economic position of owners of the soil.

If the Orangemen did not actually fling their leaders to the wolves, they took no steps to prevent England doing it, and were always first in the rush to gulp down the juiciest bits. I do not assert that landlords would have fared better without such aid as they received from the Ulster Alliance.

Possibly the process of expropriation would have been swifter, and they might not have disposed of their territorial rights on such good financial terms, but it is difficult to see that they could have lost more completely every shred of their political prestige.

The Tories came into office pledged, if pledges meant anything, to ensure to landlords their full pound of flesh and a little more. In the first flush of enthusiasm a measure proposed by Parnell, authorising the reduction of judicial rents in view of the heavy fall in agricultural prices, was rejected with contumely as "an act of gross injustice and confiscation to the landlords of Ireland." Parnell's conclusions were supported a few months later by the Cowper Commission which, though set up by the Tories, and manned with one exception by Irish landlords and Government officials, felt "constrained to recommend an earlier revision of judicial rents on account of the straitened circumstances of Irish farmers." Lord Salisbury, however, snapped his fingers at the report, declaring that to lower rents on account of falling prices would be to "lay the axe at the root of the fabric of civilised society." The landlords rejoiced mightily at so spirited a declaration, but their jubilation was premature. It was found that the northern tenants were as set as the Nationalist farmers on a revision of judicial rents, and were prepared, if the concession were denied, to induce the Liberal-Unionists to oppose the Coercion Bill and so bring down the Government. Salisbury, at

a meeting of his party, announced that unless fair rents were revised, Ulster was lost to the Union, and his English followers, throwing the landlords overboard, proceeded to give legal force to the principle which when advocated by Parnell had been attacked as confiscation in its vilest form.

This was only the first of a long series of sacrifices which the Irish landlords were compelled to make in return for the doubtful privilege of claiming that they no longer stood merely for a class, but, in the words of the Orange leader, "accepted democracy fully and unreservedly." It is true that they had their consolations. Mr. Balfour improved on Forster's methods of repression, and, by way of bringing home to the Irish the moral of fifty years of Victorian rule, celebrated the Queen's Jubilee by passing an Act which made coercion perpetual. Under this statute political prisoners were deprived of their status and treated as common criminals; newspapers were suppressed by the dozen and their editors and proprietors sent to repent their temerity in jail; and lest there should be any half-heartedness on the part of the police, private instructions were issued that they must not hesitate to shoot.

To weaken opposition to the passing of the Jubilee Coercion Act, the *Times*, during the debates on the second reading, reproduced in facsimile a letter supposed to be signed by Parnell in which the Irish leader justified the Phœnix Park murders. The letter, as the world knows now, was a forgery, but Unionist politicians, without wait-

ing to examine the evidence, accepted it unhesitatingly, and Lord Salisbury, who was soon to develop an extreme sensitiveness to Nationalist allusions about intimacy with perjurers and blackmailers, protested in the name of outraged morality against Mr. Gladstone's relations with "an ally, tainted with the strong presumption of conniving at assassination."

The *Times* had published the Pigott letters, but these, as was proved at the Parnell Commission, had been procured by a man called Houston acting as the secretary of the Irish Loyal and Patriotic Union, an anti-Land League organisation, which included in its ranks the leading Irish Unionists. No proper explanation was ever forthcoming as to whether Mr. Houston's position in the Patriotic Union was, as Sir Charles Russell said, that of "master or man." Parnell asserted that behind Pigott and Houston there was a conspiracy to effect his ruin, and he demanded that the books of the Irish Loyal and Patriotic Union should be submitted for examination by the Commission, as the books of the Land League had been. The judges declined to grant this eminently reasonable request, and Sir Charles Russell, on behalf of Parnell, withdrew from the court. Members of the Union have been protesting ever since that they had no responsibility for Houston's actions, but their refusal to clear their society by legal means leaves the world free to draw its own conclusions.

If Nationalists flung hard words at landlords, language no less bitter was used by men who pro-

fessed to be champions of the existing system. Sir Horace Plunkett is now outside the pale, but in the days when he was not only a Unionist but a member of a Conservative Ministry, he confessed that the nearer a man got to the people the farther he got from the Irish Unionist leaders. It would be difficult in an age which accepts democracy in name, if not always in reality, to damn a party more effectively in a phrase.

While the Irish oligarchs derided or ignored the will of the people, they lacked at the same time every moral quality that has enabled strong aristocracies to withstand that will and enforce submission to their own decrees. They repudiated utterly the right of democracy to rule, and also the theory that the right to rule was a trust which carried with it the obligation to serve. "Their hounds and their horses," said Parnell once in private conversation, "are the only good things the landlords of Ireland have to show for themselves." This verdict was endorsed by Standish O'Grady, to whom Parnell was a man who had betrayed his class, and who saw in the trimuph of Nationalism the destruction of everything that was worth preserving in the community.

"Your duties and responsibilities," O'Grady told his fellows, "were immense, and you whittled them away to next to nothing. Your means of ruling, your land revenue, was enormous, and you gave half of it to the usurers and the remaining half you spent with as little regard to the principle of *noblesse oblige* as if you had been retired shop-

keepers instead of a conquering and dominant caste. . . . You have spent in rent and taxes, I should say, at least some two thousand millions of pounds, and you have spent that vast sum upon anything rather than in the making of friends. You are few and friendless, and, let me add, hated. . . . You have hunted the fox till, like that old, red hunter, you have come to despise your birthright, and all that treats of it, and cultivated crops till the very clay of the earth is more intelligent than yours."

O'Grady saw Irish politics in terms of the heroic legends, which it is his glory to have rescued from the mere antiquarians and transformed by his genius into an influence that has become part of the imagination of his countrymen. But the insight that enabled him to clothe with flesh and blood the dim figures of the bardic tales forsook him when he turned his eyes to the actual Ireland of the 'eighties. Like most men of that period, he hailed Carlyle as a prophet; and Carlyle's scorn for the stupidities of democracy, and his passionate demands for rulers who could really rule, chimed in admirably with O'Grady's own prejudices as a member of the dominant Irish caste. He conceived the idea that though the Act of 1881 had stripped landlords of the privileges they had so shamefully abused they might acquire new prestige by dedicating themselves to the service of their countrymen. Rarely if ever has an aristocracy responded to such a call, and of all aristocracies the

Irish landlords were the least likely to be moved by it.

O'Grady failed to see, as Mr. Ernest Boyd says in his admirable essay, *A Fenian Unionist*, that "it was adding intellectual insult to pecuniary insult to call upon men to undertake the finest and most arduous tasks of their class just when they had added martyrdom to innumerable other grievances." The landlords did not shout down O'Grady when he expounded his gospel at Rotunda conventions, but they proceeded steadily on their own way, which produced, as he bitterly reminded them five years later, nothing more effective than "two or three public meetings, a few vapid speeches, two rent-collecting machines, and a still-born Land Corporation, as curious a freak of folly as was ever seen."

In *Toryism and the Tory Democracy*, published on the eve of Gladstone's declaration in favour of Home Rule, O'Grady confessed defeat. "Alas!" he wrote, "I believe there never will be, as I know there never has been within the cycle of recorded things, an aristocracy so rotten in its seeming strength, so recreant, resourceless, and stupid in the day of trial, so degenerate, outworn, and effete. You have outlived your day. In the normal course of things, in the natural growth of nations, I see now you should have been wiped out of existence some half-century since—would have been, but for England; long since would have fallen down and been forgotten, but for the Imperial crutch. It was a fatal crutch, that English one." That is the

epitaph of Irish landlordism, written not by an enemy, but by a would-be champion, who thought to establish a new order of *samurai* only to find that those to whom he appealed were as loath in the 'eighties, as their predecessors had been half a century earlier, to recognise the truth of Thomas Drummond's warning: "Property has its duties as well as its rights."

In the days of the first Reform Bill Drummond was a voice crying in the wilderness, but by the time O'Grady abandoned his crusade in despair, even the English Government had been driven to the conclusion that the Irish Ascendancy must be compelled to alter its ways, if not in its own interests then in the interests of its cross-channel allies. Conjointly with his campaign of repression, Mr. Arthur Balfour planned a series of ameliorative measures designed to improve conditions in what George Wyndham afterwards described as "the rotten and rigid communities" of the west.

A grant of a million and a half was made for railway development to open up the poverty-stricken areas; and later the Congested Districts Board was established, which Michael Davitt praised as an experiment in enlightened State socialism, but which was really, as was inevitable under existing conditions in Ireland, a system of despotic, if benevolent, paternalism. Nobody questions the sincerity of Mr. Balfour's desire to relieve distress, and his strongest political opponents were the first to applaud the success that crowned his work. Nationalists, however, were

not blind to the fact that Mr. Balfour was a sufficiently subtle tactician to appreciate the value of a set-off to the Plan of Campaign demands, and by concentrating on issues which concerned only a limited number of tenants to divert attention from the popular agitation for a root-and-branch reform of the land system. They resented even more strongly the assumption which is still an article of the orthodox Unionist creed that Balfourian methods constituted a new departure in constructive statesmanship. As a matter of fact, all that was good in Mr. Balfour's proposals had been adapted from the Land League programme, and succeeded only in so far as he adhered to the principles of that programme.

The worst defects of the Balfourian schemes, as is now clear in the light of practical experience, are the direct result of the refusal of their author to make any concessions to the demand for popular control which was the central doctrine of Parnell and Davitt. Temperamentally sceptical of democratic rule, Mr. Balfour's personal prejudices were strengthened by the fear that to admit the right of the people to a voice in the administration of the new departments would be to prove the case for national self-government. Therefore he entrusted the management of his boards to officials and nominated members, some of whom, it is true, were chosen because of their popular sympathies. But the leaven was not sufficient to leaven the whole lump, and even had it been something more was needed.

Popular election provides no guarantee of efficiency, though it ensures sooner or later judgment upon the incompetent, but bodies which have little to hope and less to fear from public opinion invariably tend to exercise their powers in accordance with rigid formulas. If bureaucracy is not necessarily bad government in the technical sense, it is government which exalts the letter at the expense of the spirit, and this means in the long run the triumph of officialdom. Amateurs without a mandate find it easier to take the path of least resistance when confronted with the objections of administrative experts; and though in some Irish departments nominated members have fought strongly, and not unsuccessfully, to develop a progressive policy, their efforts are hampered by lack of the driving-force that direct responsibility to electors, whose judgment is final, provides.

Mr. Arthur Balfour, in the opinion of Irish Unionists, touched, if indeed he did not exceed, the extreme limits of concession to Nationalist claims. He managed, however, to escape dangerous attacks from his own side, because it was considered good policy to boast that his coercion experiment had justified the Salisbury recipe of resolute government as the cure for Irish discontents. This legend still survives to furnish a precedent for Chief Secretaries who find it simpler to rely on bayonets than brains, and conduct their administrations in the spirit of the couplet which John Bright was fond of quoting to describe the Irish politics of his day:

"The civil power may snore at ease
While soldiers fire—to keep the peace."

But the Unionist version of the Balfourian *régime* is contradicted by indisputable facts. The constructive portion of his programme, as I have stated, was not invented by the Chief Secretary, but borrowed from the popular leaders against whom he waged war; and its success, as the sequel was to show, strengthened instead of weakening the demand for a sweeping measure of land-reform and the ending of Castle Government. It is true that support for the Plan of Campaign decreased, and the scheme fizzled out in failure. The real agency, however, which effected this result was the Parnellite Split, and not the batons and battering-rams of the Irish Executive. For the next few years the Irish people were fighting so furiously amongst themselves that they had neither inclination nor energy to carry on an active campaign against the common enemy. When the breach was healed the main struggle was renewed as vigorously as ever, but meanwhile Unionists, calmly ignoring the truth that until the Nationalists had shattered their own ranks Mr. Balfour was a beaten man, proclaimed that firmness alone was required to dragoon Ireland into submissive acceptance of English rule.

The failure of the second Home Rule Bill, the triumphant return of a Unionist Ministry in 1895, and, above all, the appointment of Mr. Gerald Balfour as Chief Secretary, delighted the hearts of

Ascendancy with the prospect of an innings in which its members would have everything their own way. To their horror, the first Irish measure of the new Government was the Land Act of 1896, a much more dangerous departure than the Gladstonian schemes in the eyes of landlords, because it introduced for the first time the principle of compulsory purchase, though its application was limited to bankrupt estates. "You would suppose," said Sir Edward Carson passionately, "the Government were Revolutionists verging on Socialism. I ask myself whether they are mad or I am mad? I am quite sure one of us is mad." Colonel Saunderson was equally emphatic. "There seemed," he said, "to be a common agreement between the bitterest enemies of England and Ministers of the Crown that the proper thing to secure the peace, happiness, and prosperity of Ireland was to sweep away the very class who, it was admitted, had been the strongest supporters of the authority of Great Britain in Ireland."

The Land Act of 1896 was, however, only the beginning of a series of shocks. Saunderson refused to join the Recess Committee because John Redmond had consented to take part in its proceedings. The Orange leader's action was criticised by some members of his own party, but in strict logic the arguments were on Saunderson's side. It was the main principle of Unionist policy that while it might be advisable under certain circumstances to do things for Nationalists, it would be absolutely fatal to give them the power of doing

things for themselves. Yet this was the power which Mr. Gerald Balfour determined to concede as part of his scheme of "killing Home Rule with kindness." In spite of Saunderson's refusal to countenance its work the Recess Committee blossomed into the Department of Agriculture and Technical Instruction which violated all the traditions of Irish Boards by announcing that its aim was to "be in touch with the public opinion of the classes whom its work concerns, and to rely largely for its success upon their active assistance and co-operation."

Before the Bill creating the Department became law, Mr. Balfour had taken an even more revolutionary step by passing the Local Government Act of 1898. As usual he pillaged the programme of the Land League for his ideas. A scheme almost identical in principle and detail had been outlined by Mr. T. M. Healy as far back as 1883, and introduced in the form of a Bill by Mr. John Barry, only to suffer the fate of all constructive measures proposed by Nationalists at Westminster. It must in fairness be admitted that, whether he borrowed or invented, Mr. Balfour's departure was startling for a Conservative politician. At a stroke all local administration was transferred to democratically-elected councils from the hands of the oligarchial Grand Juries; as M. Paul-Dubois says: "it was the exit of the garrison and the entrance of the people."

The Ascendancy leaders would have fought the measure could they have depended on their fol-

lowers, but it was clear from the first that the rank and file of the Ulstermen were with Mr. Balfour. Grand Jury rule was liked no better in the North than in the South, and Protestant farmers objected as strongly as Nationalists to a system which, even if honestly worked—and the records of Grand Jury jobbery speak for themselves—made power and patronage in local administration an unassailable landlord monopoly.

Katharine Tynan, in *The Years of the Shadow*, relates an incident of a county surveyor of the old style told her by an Irish official, who maintained that one could always tell when one was approaching the house of a Grand Juryman by the well-made and well-kept roads. "His place would be as bare as your hand," the tale ran, "till the day came to pass the accounts of the road-contractors, etc. Then his lawn would be like a yard at the Limerick Junction with cattle, sheep, pigs, ducks, geese, turkeys, and chickens. A man coming in would say, 'Would your honour pass my little account?' 'Oh, I don't see your name down in the mistress's present-book.' 'Oh yes, your honour, I brought a little bonneen'."

It was right in the landlords' eyes that the masses should submit to the dictation of the classes as to how the money they provided for the management of local affairs should be spent, but Saunderson, with tears in his eyes, told the House of Commons that "if the majority in Ireland were to have a free hand in taxing the minority, it would be impossible to live long in the country with

clothes on one's back." The oligarchs, however, were shrewd enough to see that mere lamentations would not serve their purpose, and with commendable prudence set themselves to make the best of a bad business. They were prepared to compound what they denounced as robbery for a bribe, and under the pretext that they were certain to be victimised by unfair rating succeeded in making their share of the poor rate a charge on Imperial resources. Thus they lined their pockets to the amount of £350,000 a year, without sacrificing their grievances as a dispossessed and persecuted class.

It was during Mr. Gerald Balfour's Chief Secretaryship that the report of the Childers Commission on the Financial Relations between England and Ireland was published. For Irishmen of all classes the pith of the recommendations was summed up in the declaration that for purposes of taxation England and Ireland should be regarded as separate entities, and in the finding, accepted by all the commissioners save two, that whereas all Ireland in fact contributed one-eleventh of tax revenue she should in equity provide no more than one-twentieth. Here was a grievance that came home no less forcibly to Unionists than Nationalists, and for a moment it seemed as if a common platform had been found upon which all parties could unite. The strange spectacle was witnessed of Lord Dunraven addressing meetings side by side with John Daly, who had been imprisoned as a dynamiter; and of Colonel Saunderson and Sir Edward Carson

combining with Mr. Dillon and Mr. Healy to demand restitution from the British Government.

Saunderson neatly summed up the underlying principle of all the boasted experiments in ameliorative legislation when he declared that England was always willing to dry Ireland's tears with a pocket-handkerchief purchased at Ireland's expense. Unfortunately epigrams, however effective, did not suffice to lay the foundations of a practical policy; and the strangely-assorted allies, though still professing to aim at the same end, differed so radically as to the means of attaining this end that their unity did not survive a few forcible-feeble demonstrations demanding redress from Westminster.

British Ministers lost no time in making it plain that the scrapping of the existing system of financial relations meant also the scrapping of the Union, a threat which soon brought to heel the majority of the landlords who had been denouncing over-taxation. Nationalists, on the other hand, had never entertained any real hopes that restitution would be made. They did not underrate the importance of the findings of the Childers Commission, but, realizing that England had no intention of giving effect to them, they felt that the first need of the situation was to stop the drain of money by securing for Ireland the power to control her own affairs.

Parnellites and anti-Parnellites were still at one another's throats when the Report of the Financial Relations Commission was published, and their

divisions did not tend, to put it mildly, to the development of a common plan of action. When Nationalists at last agreed to sink their differences it was on the basis not of resistance to over-taxation, but of a united effort to end landlordism. Nowadays it is generally taken for granted that the British Government and the landowners were eager to meet the legitimate demands of the tenants, and deserve the greater part of the credit for the settlement of 1903. As a matter of fact the United Irish League was assailed no less viciously than any of the national organisations which had preceded it. In the summer of 1901 two-thirds of the Irish counties, together with the cities of Dublin, Cork, and Limerick were proclaimed under the Coercion Act; public meetings were suppressed, the speakers batoned by the police, and afterwards sent to jail by Castle magistrates; and finally a Land Trust was formed with a capital of £100,000 to prosecute Messrs. Redmond, O'Brien, Davitt, and Dillon for conspiracy. Repression, however, so far from breaking the movement, gave it solidity and coherence; and to the dismay of the Ascendancy the Protestant farmers of Ulster, instead of hastening to join battle with the Nationalist legions, began, under the leadership of Mr. T. W. Russell, to make demands on their own account which were indistinguishable from those of the United Irish League.

Mr. Wyndham, who had succeeded Mr. Gerald Balfour as Chief Secretary, was never a coercionist by conviction, and desired nothing more eagerly

than to drop a weapon in the efficacy of which he had little belief. A letter by Captain Shawe-Taylor proposing a round-table conference of representatives of landlords and tenants gave Wyndham his opportunity. He declared in words that marked a new departure in English policy: "No Government can settle the Irish land question. It must be settled by the parties interested. The extent of useful action on the part of any Government is limited to providing facilities, in so far as that may be possible, for giving effect to any settlement arrived at by the parties."

The conference was held, and resulted in an agreement known as the Dunraven Treaty which became the basis of the Wyndham Act of 1903. For my purposes it is not necessary to do more than state in the baldest outline the main principles of the Act. As an inducement to the landlords to sell, payment was to be in cash instead of stock. Purchase price was to be calculated on the basis of second-term judicial rents or their equivalent, and selling landlords were to receive a sum which, invested in gilt-edged securities at 3 or 3½ per cent. would yield an income equal to their rents after deducting 10 per cent., representing the former cost of collection. The annuities payable by the tenant were calculated to allow a reduction of from 15 to 25 per cent. on second-term judicial rents. To bridge the gap between the 10 per cent. reduction in the landlord's income and the 15 to 25 per cent. reduction in the tenant's annuities, the State

was to provide a sum of £12,000,000, which would give the selling landlord a bonus of 12 per cent.

Undoubtedly, the provisions of the Act favoured the owners, and the bitter criticisms of Nationalist leaders like Mr. Davitt and Mr. Dillon were in the main justified. But their attacks did little or nothing to stem the rush to accept Mr. Wyndham's terms. Though tenants were well aware that they were paying a stiff price, they felt that it was worth it for the satisfaction of getting rid of landlordism. As the pessimists prophesied, the financial provisions of the Act broke down, not indeed through any reluctance to purchase, but through the depreciation of the stock which, like all Government securities of the period, fell heavily inside a few years. The Birrell Act was designed to remedy this, and did afford a measure of relief, though, unfortunately, the effect was only temporary.

In spite of the defects of these Acts, the fact that out of 470,000 holdings all save 50,000 have been already sold, or agreed to be sold, is the best proof of their popularity. If they have not settled the Land Question, they have for all practical purposes ended the Land War which for over a century had been the chief bone of contention between classes. The completion of land purchase is still an urgent and complex problem, but its bearing is sectional rather than national, and the issue is no longer to establish a novel and highly disputable principle, but to apply a precedent accepted by all parties.

Chapter X.

THE SHATTERED IDOL.

The Unionist reactionaries were right and the Unionist progressives wrong in their view of the Balfourian policy of killing Home Rule with kindness. Instead of dying, the Home Rule movement acquired new strength, whereas Unionism began visibly to wilt and wither. Possibly, the result might have been different had the policy been one of kindness in reality instead of merely in name. But the concessions which were trumpeted as an unparalleled piece of magnanimity, were only a poor instalment of justice that had been long denied, and were valued less as a boon than as a lever which might be used to obtain rights that were still refused, and in particular the fundamental right of the Irish people to order their own affairs without supervision or interference.

The Balfours forgot that, as Campbell-Bannerman said, "good government is no substitute for self-government," though, as a matter of fact, their government was not good, except by contrast with former coercionist administrations which had no policy save that of naked force. By removing, however, some of the barriers that had fenced Ascendancy, they revealed to the world the true

nature of the crazy fabric, and demolished out of hand the main arguments upon which Unionists had relied for a century.

With the transfer of the land no force was left in the cry that Nationalism menaced property rights. On the contrary, it was the landlords who had become irresponsibles, and the real stake in the country was held by the farmers. More grotesque still was the fact that while the whole machinery of local government had passed into the hands of the masses, the central administration remained the preserve of the classes who, now that popular elections had been instituted, were powerless to return even a poor-law guardian or a district councillor. Old-fashioned reactionaries still professed to believe that the right way of dealing with this anomaly was to abolish popular control; the longer heads amongst the dominant caste recognised the necessity of finding some other way out of the difficulty.

Some, like Sir Horace Plunkett, persuaded themselves that schemes of economic development would provide a solution. The land problem, as they saw, did not end with possession of the soil; unless the new occupiers were taught to use their land to the best advantage the last state of things promised to be worse than the first. This was an admirable idea, and on the whole it has had the success it deserved. Nobody is likely to underrate the importance of the co-operative campaign, not merely in increasing material prosperity, but in stiffening the moral

backbone of the people, in developing initiative, and in driving home a new conception of the value of united effort. Above all, it rejected the benevolent despot theory which had hitherto tainted Irish ameliorative schemes, and instead of drilling people into accepting what others did for them, inspired them with the desire to do things for themselves. But it failed altogether to prove, as many in perfect good faith believed, that economic progress would banish political discontent. Sir Horace Plunkett, who was long the champion of this school, has recently issued a memorable recantation of his former views. "Anybody who imagines that Ireland's political grievances have any close relation to her economic condition," he told an interviewer, "either ignores all Irish history or is incapable of understanding the Irish mind. The only sound conclusion to be drawn from the continuance, and, indeed, the intensification of political discontent and agitation in times of comparative prosperity, is that there is no other than a political cure for a political disease."

There were Unionists in the early years of the century who divined, perhaps more clearly than Sir Horace Plunkett, that political changes were inevitable. They set afoot the Devolution Movement, which provoked so embittered a controversy that the facts of what was in reality a simple political issue are still obscure to the majority of Irishmen. If we are to take the combatants at their word, it was on both sides a dark and unscrupulous business of plot and counter-plot,

intrigue and ambuscade, inspired by the lowest and most degrading motives, and fought to a finish without either quarter or mercy. But when one gets down behind the rant and rhetoric one finds, I think, that while there was a real conflict of principles the rival parties pursued their views in good faith.

The landlords, who advocated Devolution as a process in keeping with the "step by step" method so dear to a certain type of English reformer, were really convinced that they were making a new departure, and offering a considerable sacrifice as the price of peace. In rejecting the offer men like Mr. Redmond and Mr. Dillon did not bang and bar the door against a policy of conciliation. Their difficulty was that they had no guarantee that the scheme would lead to the desired goal of self-government; and, rightly or wrongly, they believed that it was so framed as to obtain a fresh lease of power for a class irreconcilably opposed to democratic reforms and national aspirations.

The objection might conceivably have been overcome had the Devolutionists been able to offer as the price of co-operation an army and not merely a headquarter staff. Fifteen years ago Nationalists would not have haggled unduly over conditions that would have secured Ulster's assent to the principle of Irish unity. But no sooner was a hint of the Devolution plan disclosed than it was evident that the Ulstermen who constituted the fighting force of Unionism would have nothing to do with the project. In Nationalist eyes it was certainly

not business to take a parody of Home Rule with the landlords and without the Ulstermen.

Orange opposition not only kept the Nationalists aloof but dealt a knock-out blow to the Reform proposals. The Ulster members led the crusade which resulted in the resignation of Wyndham, the muzzling of Sir Antony Macdonnell, and the prompt abandonment by the Government of any attempt to revise Castle institutions in accordance with modern, much less Irish, ideas. The Devolutionists, who seemed at one time the nucleus of what promised to be a formidable party, were resolved into a group of individuals, whose influence in public affairs speedily became a negligible quantity.

Another development, the full significance of which escaped attention at the time, was the appearance of Sir Edward Carson in the part of an Ulster leader in opposition to Devolution. He had, it is true, shared with Colonel Saunderson the honour of defeating the second Home Rule Bill, and was always foremost in challenging schemes that appeared to threaten the supremacy of the ruling caste. Hitherto, however, he had figured mainly as the champion of reactionary landlordism, and his irreconcilable hostility to any measure designed to improve the position of the tenant had caused him to be looked on with as little favour by rural Ulster as by Nationalist Ireland. But with the land question out of the way for all practical purposes, it was possible, so Sir Edward Carson saw, by playing on Ulster fears of

Nationalism to develop a plan of campaign which, if it could not restore the old system, might at least prevent it from being wholly submerged, and ensure the failure of any attempt to introduce a constructive policy modelled on progressive lines.

Though it was not generally recognised, the Devolution business marked the end of what had been known for a century as Irish Unionism. The Dunravenites protested that they were not Home Rulers, but it was patent they were not Unionists in any accepted sense of the word. Their policy insisted that the co-operation of the majority of the Irish people was essential to the success of any scheme of government. But the basic principle of Unionism was that its adherents were a "garrison" whose claim to preferential treatment rested on their power to make it possible for England to hold Ireland in opposition to the will of an Irish majority; and the first article of their creed declared that measures, which imperilled their supremacy or were framed with a view to Nationalist rather than Unionist interests, must necessarily prove disastrous to the connection between the two islands.

The Ulstermen, who had scotched Devolution, now proclaimed that they alone in Ireland stood for the Union and nothing but the Union; and it was under this flag they mustered when, in the years following the Conservative *débâcle* of 1906, electoral pressure enabled the Nationalists to compel the victorious Liberals to keep their Home Rule pledges. By this time Sir Edward Carson

had become the acknowledged Ulster leader, though he still posed as the envoy of the southern Unionists. It was in their name that he made his appeal to the North to oppose self-government by force; and the note of all his earlier speeches at least was that while Ulster was strong enough to protect herself under any system that might be set up, she was bound in honour to devote her resources to safeguarding the scattered Protestants of the South.

Sir Edward Carson's line was very cleverly chosen. It assured Ulster's lead in the new campaign, and incidentally strengthened his claim to lead Ulster. At the same time it prevented the southern Unionists from taking action on their own account, and reduced them to the position they were henceforth to occupy as a mere joint in the Ulster tail. Though the Devolutionists were nominally not in agreement with the Carsonites, they joined with them in opposing Mr. Asquith's proposals, on the ground that the measure was unfair to them and would not provide in practice a final settlement of the difficulty. These tactics won the Devolutionists no favour in the North, while they strengthened Nationalist suspicions that the policy, whatever might be its professed objects, aimed first and foremost at preventing any adequate grant of self-government.

The Orangemen, as I have said, hoisted the Unionist banner, and at the outset the majority of them undoubtedly believed they were fighting a continuation of the battle that had been waged

against the Gladstonian schemes. But as the struggle developed a new element made itself felt. Very early in the debates on the Bill of 1912, Sir Edward Carson raised the point that there was no argument for giving Home Rule to Ireland that could not be urged for giving a free choice of their future form of government to the Protestant majority in the north-eastern counties. This view met with a certain amount of approval from the Treasury Bench, particularly from Ministers like Mr. Lloyd George and Mr. Churchill, who persuaded themselves that it offered a chance of buying off Ulster opposition. But Sir Edward Carson was not yet in the humour for a deal on these terms. He offered exclusion not as a settlement, but merely as a possible alternative to civil war, and insisted that, even were it accepted, he retained his right to fight the Bill to the uttermost. To his followers in the North, and to southern Unionists who were growing visibly uneasy, the proposal was justified in private as a device for wrecking the Bill. If the Government accepted the proposal, the Nationalists, objectors were told, would be forced to reject the measure, and the Union system would hold the field.

Sir Edward Carson may have believed in the possibility of outmanœuvring both the Government and the Nationalists, and by a bold stroke recovering all the ground that Unionism had lost. Events, however, were developing which were destined radically to alter his position. With the signing of the Solemn League and Covenant and the forma-

tion of the Provisional Government, the issue, as far as Ulster was concerned, entered upon a new phase. By this act the northern Protestants proclaimed themselves an entity apart from the rest of Ireland, and decreed the exclusion of Unionists, as well as Nationalists, who had the misfortune to reside on the wrong bank of the Boyne. Assurances, needless to say, were solemnly given that the step had been taken in the true interests of the southern Protestants. By it they would be freed from all responsibility, and had merely to gather the fruit of the Ulstermens' exertions. Should danger in any form threaten them, Sir Edward Carson promised that he would march his army from Belfast to Cork to ensure their safety.

Fine words, however, mean little or nothing in politics. To those who looked beneath the surface, it was becoming every day more clear that Ulster was as resolute to cut loose from her former allies as from her Nationalist opponents. She had tolerated rather than welcomed the leadership of southern landlords in the past, and throughout the land struggle, as I have endeavoured to show, was constantly in opposition to their policy. Had the landlord party remained in control in the North as in the South, divisions of opinion might not have been so acute, and an accommodation would probably have been arrived at. But in the interval between the defeat of the second Home Rule Bill in 1893 and the introduction of Mr. Asquith's measure in 1912, new forces had been at work in Ulster, and the controlling power in northern

Unionism had passed out of the hands of the landed proprietors into those of the merchants and manufacturers of Belfast and its neighbouring industrial districts.

Even in the election of 1906, the majority of candidates returned for Orange constituencies were either members of the land-owning class or else men who, having made money in business, aspired to crown their achievement by entering the ranks of the county families. The growing demand for social reform, and especially the challenge which Labour was beginning to throw down, convinced capitalists, however, that they must be up and doing if they wished to retain what they held. This feeling was general amongst employers throughout the Three Kingdoms, but it was particularly strong in Belfast, where in 1907 an upheaval in the ranks of unskilled Labour, organised by James Larkin, had submerged for a time the old dividing lines of Protestant and Catholic. By skilfully playing on sectarian passions the solidarity of the workers was broken, but employers, who had seen in this rising the end of all things, decided that they must take measures to prevent any recurrence of such a danger.

Sir Edward Carson's record as an uncompromising opponent of Labour was in the eyes of northern capitalists not the least of his merits, and they discerned in him the saviour of society as well as the defender of Protestantism. From the first they were his most active lieutenants, and the result of their exertions was in a large measure to

relegate to purely honorary positions in the movement the class that had formerly looked on leadership as its right. Londonderrys, Abercorns, Massereenes, and Dufferins still enjoyed prestige by virtue of their titles, and loomed in the public eye as personages of importance, but the real work was done by men to whom the one dominant factor in the struggle was the interest of the industrial employer, not of the landed aristocrat.

Owners of land North and South had a common bond, but to the Belfast manufacturer southern Unionists made as little appeal as southern Nationalists. For the most part the capitalist came of farming stock, and while he was shrewd enough to see that a successful attack on any form of property menaced all, a hereditary and often unconscious bias against landlordism led him to view with equanimity the widening of the gulf between Irishmen who believed in Unionism and Unionists who believed only in Ulster.

The difference of class between the two Unionist sections was complicated by a difference of creed which, if it did not explode in violent antagonisms, gave rise to friction that, however skilfully concealed from the outer world, produced changes of momentous importance. Roughly, it may be said that whereas the landlords were Episcopalians the capitalists were Presbyterians. Prior to Disestablishment Episcopalians had a monopoly of power in Unionist Ireland, and almost down to the opening of the Carson campaign, Presbyterians, though the strongest force in Ulster, never suc-

ceeded in obtaining what they believed to be their fair proportion of northern constituencies. The new movement gave them the long-desired opportunity, and one of the arguments employed effectively behind the scenes to reconcile opinion to the exclusion of six counties instead of the whole province, was that the smaller enclave would possess not merely a Protestant but a Presbyterian majority.

In addition to sectarian and social prejudices, there were economic influences making for separation. Agricultural Ulster is bound by as close ties to the rest of Ireland as Munster and Connacht are to Leinster; and as a centre from which imported goods are distributed over the southern provinces, Belfast ranks second only to Dublin. The manufacturing North, however, occupies a very different position. Its main industries—textiles and shipbuilding—not only import their raw materials, but export their finished products, with the result that those who control these industries have in their everyday life no intimate relationship with the mass of their fellow-countrymen, and not unnaturally come to feel themselves in Ireland rather than of it. Economically, their outlook has not advanced beyond that of the later Victorians, and remains a curious blend of the arrogant individualism of the Manchester school combined with a belief, of which nowadays Mr. Horatio Bottomley is the high priest, that the world will be saved only in so far as it places dictatorial powers in the hands of the "business man."

These people retain in no small measure the old opposition to agriculture, which was common amongst manufacturers in the early stages of the industrial revolution; and the Irish farmer in particular repels them, because they persuade themselves that as he forced the landlord to surrender his property, so, should he obtain full political power, he may be trusted to use it first and foremost to fill his pockets at the expense of those engaged in commerce. Not so long ago their cry was that the Irish farmer was economically a hide-bound reactionary with whom progressive industrialists could not possibly act in harmony. Since the Irish worker developed class-consciousness, Ulster has made the horrible discovery that his supposed conservatism is really a mask for the most virulent kind of Bolshevism, and he figures in her platform speeches as a new type of incendiary who, by arts known only to himself, has managed to combine the obscurantist precepts of the Vatican with the revolutionary practices of Lenin and Trotsky.

The detachment of the northern capitalist from the main currents of Irish life did not draw him closer to his fellows in Great Britain On the contrary, he has convinced himself that developments which the vast majority of English employers recognise are inevitable, have as their object no other aim than to make his position impossible. He boasts it as a virtue that he asks only "to be let alone," and formulates quite seriously the theory that a Government which interferes with

the industrial *status quo* thereby forfeits the allegiance of good capitalists. It was obvious that when the driving force in Ulster's politics passed into the hands of men holding these views, the tendency would display itself sooner or later to make themselves secure against socialistic, or even social, legislation initiated by England no less than against the national aspirations of the Irish people.

Though the pretence of purely wrecking tactics was still maintained, the policy of cutting loose from Ireland made rapid headway in the northern counties during the early months of 1914. The rank and file were confident that they had trumped all the Nationalist aces, but with the inner circle of Carsonites, and particularly with the leaders of the industrial group, exclusion was taken for granted, and the struggle turned on the area to be excluded.

The European conflict gave a great impetus to separatist sentiment in Ulster. In the first place, its opening weeks saw Home Rule at last on the Statute Book, and though the operation of the Act was indefinitely suspended, the onus lay now on the Carsonites of strengthening their own defences against future assaults instead of organising forays into the enemy's country. More important still, the policy for which Great Britain, officially at least, drew the sword was a direct repudiation of the fundamental principles of Unionism. As I have stated in the opening chapter, the real purpose of the authors of the Union was to devise a counter-check to the democratic theories which

revolutionary France like a mountain in eruption scattered far and wide over Europe. For more than a century every proposal to modify the existing *régime* in Ireland had been met by the argument that concessions which paid even lip-service to the idea of popular control were a breach of the Union agreement. But the very people who for a generation had been using this argument to defeat such a modified measure of freedom as was implied in the demand for Home Rule, now girded up their loins in the name of democracy to do battle against Germany for the principle of government by the consent of the governed.

The wheel had at last come full circle. To the eye of the ironist, the spectacle of the Bonar Laws, Milners, and Carsons blessing the legions that went forth to fight for the rights of democracies and of subject races was as piquant as would have been to an eighteenth century Irishman the appearance of Castlereagh or Fitzgibbon in red caps of Liberty declaiming the phrases of Danton and exalting Tom Paine amongst the Prophets. Whatever view one might take of the sincerity of the transformation, it was clear that the priests of the Unionist Baal had effectively destroyed their own altars. In practice their creed might still survive, but any logical or intellectual basis that it had retained was hopelessly shattered.

If the war revealed Unionism to some of its former admirers as a political philosophy, differing only from the most abhorrent varieties of

Prussianism in that its champions, unlike the Germans, have never been able to formulate a philosophic defence of their beliefs, the Ulster leaders were shrewd enough to realize that this did not necessarily mean they must abandon their dreams of Ascendancy. On the contrary, the emergence of the idea of self-determination actually strengthened their case, though Nationalists of all shades of opinion shut their eyes to this fact.

So long as the Irish demand was limited to Home Rule, there was an irresistible case for what Sir Horace Plunkett has called the "moral coercion" of Ulster. Every Nationalist leader, however moderate, had insisted that Home Rule was not a concession of the full Irish claim, which is, and has always been, that Ireland is a separate and independent nation over whose affairs Great Britain is in equity no more entitled to exercise control than she is to regulate the destinies of France or Italy. O'Connell's Repeal, Butt's Federalism, Home Rule as advocated by Parnell and Redmond, were not surrenders but compromises, adopted under duress, and with the express stipulation that a frank acceptance of British sovereignty as the basis of a treaty between the two peoples entailed the acceptance of Irish unity by those Irishmen who regarded themselves as the English "garrison." If Nationalists agreed to abate their rights in the interests of the Empire, it was, or rather it ought to have been, axiomatic that Great Britain was bound to exact, if necessary, an equal sacrifice from Unionists, more

especially as it was the loudest boast of this section that they were Imperialists first and Irishmen afterwards.

Virtue went out of constitutionalism when the success of Sir Edward Carson's campaign showed that British politicians had no intention of compelling Ulstermen, even in the interests of the Empire, to accept obligations which they were determined to ram down the throats of all sections of Nationalists at the point of the bayonet. Ireland was therefore free to fall back on her original demand for full independence, and she adopted this course the more readily because she found that the most uncompromising statement of her claim was to British war declarations about the rights of subject nations as the squeak of a penny whistle to the thunder of massed bands.

Ulster, however, was not caught napping. With that heroic contempt for mere logic which has been not the least valuable of their assets, the northern leaders hastened to declare that self-determination, though a panacea for the ills of all other subject nationalities, would have in Ireland the effect of a deadly poison. But they also insisted that if Ireland were permitted to drain this fatal cup Ulster would not be denied her right to administer the same poison to herself. Whatever we may think of the reasoning processes by which Carsonites professed to arrive at this conclusion, it was clear enough that if both parties stood rigidly for self-determination, partition was inevitable. Sinn Feiners indeed contended that everything would be

right for them were their claims submitted to the Peace Conference. While the decision of this body must on the merits of the case have been in favour of Ireland as against England, there is little doubt that on any interpretation of Wilson principles it would have been bound to uphold the claim of Ulster against Ireland. It goes without saying that the terms of the Covenant would have been disregarded and the area to be excluded reduced far below the Carsonite minimum, concessions sufficiently exasperating to the Ulstermen. Nationalists, however, would not in this event have found themselves much better off, for their objection was to recognition of partition as a principle and not to the extent to which the principle might be applied.

The question of Ireland and the Peace Conference has of course only an academic interest. Sinn Fein was barred from presenting its claim; and Great Britain insisted on her right to impose a settlement in accordance not with Irish needs but with what she conceived to be her own interests. Statesman after statesman rose in the House of Commons to recant without a blush the doctrines which for five long years they had been preaching as essential not only to the welfare of the British Empire but to the salvation of humanity.

Mr. Bonar Law denounced "self-determination" as a "barbarous word"; and Sir Edward Carson declared that those who professed belief in the doctrine had no other object than to make, as he put it, "the world safe for hypocrisy." Unfor-

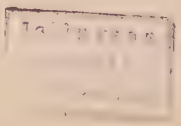
tunately for him, it was his allies on the Front Benches who achieved the crowning triumph of political hypocrisy. Mr. Lloyd George did not deny that self-determination, in the sense in which the word figured in his war-speeches, meant that Irishmen were free to choose a Republican system, if they so desired. He strove to wriggle out of the difficulty by stating—what was perfectly true—that official Liberalism and Labour, while taunting him with the inadequacy of his Irish policy, were no more prepared than the Coalitionists to give the Irish people a free choice. The retort was effective from the point of view of English party politics, but in Ireland it served only to strengthen the growing conviction that pledges from any section of British politicians have no binding force.

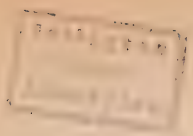
Self-determination, on Mr. Lloyd George's theory, is to be granted only when it is certain a subject nation can be trusted to do what its overlord is willing to endorse. This was the policy adopted by Germany in the Russian border-states after Brest-Litovsk, when troops were marched in to ensure that the plebiscites should go the right way. Nobody was more vehement in denunciation of this outrage on democracy than Mr. Lloyd George, yet the principle by which Prussia sought to make Esthonia and Lithuania safe for the Baltic barons is in essence the principle by which Ulster is to be made safe for Ascendancy.

In the opinion of the Coalition Government, the one thing necessary to ensure the success of an

Irish settlement is to provide Ulster with the greatest possible measure of self-determination, and this again can be done only by prohibiting the inhabitants of all other parts of the island, whether Unionists or Nationalists, from exercising a similar right. Previous Home Rule Bills failed to meet the demand for full self-governing powers, but Mr. Lloyd George has improved on the efforts of all his predecessors by using the cry of self-determination as a pretence for sacrificing the rights of a majority to the interests of a privileged minority. But the fourth Home Rule Bill, however tempting a subject, has nothing to do with Unionism. That creed, as Mr. Austen Chamberlain admitted in his speech on the second reading of the Bill, is dead without hope of resurrection; and though Ireland may continue to be ruled by the methods of Castlereagh and his successors, the political philosophy upon which these statesmen relied for their justification has become as irrelevant as the Brehon Laws.

It is a fitting climax to the ironical record of Unionism that the faithful few who still decline to admit defeat, and dream vain dreams of regaining the vanished "glories of their blood and state," should huddle to-day behind the soutane of Dr. Walter Macdonald, late Senior Professor of Theology at Maynooth, who bases England's claim to supremacy in Ireland not on the Bible and the British Constitution, but on the Canon Law of the Catholic Church.





INDEX

Æ. (George Russell), on Irish country towns, 45—46.

Balfour, Arthur, 198, 200, 205—208.
Balfour, Gerald, 208—214.
Barry, John, 210.
Beresford, George de la Poer (Bishop of Kilmore), 60.
Beresford, Lord George, Waterford Election, 83.
Beresford, Marcus, 109.
Biggar, Joseph, 154, 156.
Birrell Act, 216.
Boycotting, 67—68, 166—167.
Boyd, Ernest, 204.
Bright, John, 144—145, 207.
Butt, Isaac, 129, 148—156, 164.

Callwell, Mrs, *Old Irish Life*, 31—34.
Carlisle, Earl of, 117.
Carnarvon, Lord, 178, 180.
Carson, Sir Edward, 70, 71, 140, 209, 221—226, 231, 233, 234.
Castlereagh, Viscount, 19—21, 26, 78.
Catholic Emancipation, 83—84, 103.
Chamberlain, Austen, 236.
Chamberlain, Joseph, 182—184.
Charlemont, Earl of, 88.
Chesterfield, Earl of, 57.
Childers, Erskine, *Framework of Home Rule*, 17.
Churchill, Lord Randolph, 196.
Churchill, Winston, 224.
Clare, Earl of. *See* Fitzgibbon, John.
Cobbett, William, 59—60.
Congested Districts Board, 205.
Cooke, Dr. Henry, 51—52, 53.
Crowbar Brigade, 128—9, 161.
Cullen, Cardinal, Archbishop of Dublin), 112—114, 115, 116—118.
Curran, John Philpot, 7.

Davitt, Michael, 161—169, 205.
Departure, The New, 164.

Devolution Movement, 69—71, 219—222.
Dicey, Professor E. V., 188.
Dill, Dr., 103—105, 107—8, 110.
Dillon, John, 214, 216, 220.
Donegall, Earl of, 44—45.
Donoughmore, Earl of, 36.
Drummond, Thomas, 36.
Dublin Castle, Ascendancy redoubt, 58; mechanism of, 64—67; reaction on Downing Street, 73—76; Chamberlain's indictment of, 183—184.
Dufferin, Sir John, 3.
Duffy, Gavan, 92, 113, 114, 125, 140, 188, 189.
Dunraven, Lord, 64, 65, 70, 212.
Duvergier, M., 101.

Edgeworth, Maria, 21, 90.
Education, National System of, 51—55.
Encumbered Estates Act, 129—130.
Established Church, political bias of, 47—50; Gladstone's Disestablishment Act, 119—122.
Exeter, Bishop of, 92.

Fenianism, clerical opposition to, 119—122; hostility to agrarianism, 140—141; appeals to English principles, 141—144; democratic basis of, 145—146.
Financial Relations Commission, 212—214.
Fitzgibbon, John (Earl of Clare), 12, 15—19, 25.
Fletcher, Judge, 37.
Forster, W. E. (Chief Secretary), 168, 172—3, 174.
Fox Charles James, 6.
Fox, Judge, 39.
Fox, M. (Distress in Mayo, 1880), 188—9.
Franchise Act of 1885, 176—179.
Froude, J. A., 23.

Galbraith, Dr., 178.
George III., 4, 25.
George, D. Lloyd, 224, 235, 236.
Gladstone, W. E., disestablishes Irish Church, 119—122; first steps in land reform, 147; as coercionist, 167—8; Land Act of 1881, 168—170; conflict with Parnell, 169—176; Tories force his hand, 176—178; accepts Home Rule, 181—182.
Gordon, General, 159—160.
Grattan, Henry, 16, 72, 77.
Grenville Correspondence, 5.
Grey, Earl, 88.
Griffith, Arthur, 137.

Hardwicke Papers, 60—63.
Healy, T. M., 210.
Heytesbury, Lord, 68.
Houston, Mrs., *Twenty Years in the Wild West*, 108—9.
Howard, John, 55.

Kettle, T. M., 71.
Kickham, Charles, 165.

Kilmainham Treaty, 174.
Kilrush Evictions, 129.
Kipling, Rudyard, 191.

Land Corporation, to fight Land League, 175, 204.
Land League, Rise of, 161—165; its power, 165—166; boycotting, 166—167; secures Act of 1881, 168, 169; Manifesto to Ulster, 194.
Land Trust, 214.
Lecky, W. E. H., 23, 84, 98, 100.
Lewis, Sir George Cornewall, 35.
London, Bishop of, 103.
Lyndhurst, Lord, 93.

Mant, Dr., Bishop of Down and Conor, 109—110.
May, Sir Erskine, 92.
Mayo, Distress in, 158—159.
Martins of Ballinahinch, 31—34, 130.
Melbourne Ministry, 86—93.
Mitchel, John, 131, 132, 135.
Moore, George Henry, 115—116, 125, 127.
Morley, Viscount, 66, 147, 174, 176, 179.
Municipal Reform, demanded by O'Connell, 91—93.
Municipal Reform Commission, 1835, Report of, 42—44.
M'Cabe, Dr., Archbishop of Dublin, 172.
Macdonald, Dr. Walter, 236
MacDonnell, Lord, 69, 70—71.
Nation, The, 42.
Newman, Cardinal, Gladstone's appeal to, 172.
Nimmo, on landlord tyranny, 40.

O'Brien, Barry, *Dublin Castle and the Irish People*, 64, 68, 69; *Life of Parnell*, 150, 168.
O'Brien, Smith, 136.
O'Brien, William, 173, 214.
O'Connell, Daniel, rejects Veto proposals, 78—80; political philosophy of, 81 — 82; Emancipation campaign, 83—84; tests the Union system, 86—92; Clontarf, 93—94; moderation of, 96; democratic views of, 98—100; attitude to agrarianism, 135; accepts British connection, 148.
O'Connell, John, 136.
O'Connor, T. P., *Parnell Movement*, 128, 129.
O'Grady, Standish, 202—205.

Parnell, Charles Stewart, obstruction campaign, 154—156; conflict with Gladstone, 170—173; Kilmainham Treaty, 174; electoral triumph of, 179, 180; negotiates with Tories, 180—182; political creed of, 185—187; uses colonial precedents for Home Rule, 188—192; Cowper Commission, 192—200; verdict on Irish landlords, 202.

Parnell Commission, 162, 186.
Parnellite Split, 208.
Parsons, Laurence, 7.
Paul-Dubois, L., 210.
Peel, Sir Robert, 58—59, 67—8, 89, 91, 92.
Pigott, R., 200—201.
Pitt, William, 13, 14, 24, 25, 26, 27, 63.
Plan of Campaign, 206, 208.
Plunket, Lord, 59—60.
Plunkett, Sir Horace, 202, 218—219, 232.
Plunkett, Lord, Bishop of Tuam, 105—106.
Pope's Brass Band, The, 114.
Poor Law Commissions, 1835 and 1906, 123—124.
Proselytism, 103—111.

Recess Committee, 209, 210.
Redmond, John, 209, 220, 232.
Regium Donum, 78.
Revolution, The French, effect on Ireland, 8.
Roden, Earl of, 53.
Russell, Sir Charles, 201.
Russell, T. W., 214.

Salisbury, Lord, 170, 176, 177, 190, 196, 199, 201.
Saunderson, Colonel, 190, 193—197, 209, 211, 212, 213.
Saye and Sele, Lord, 5.
Senior, Nassau, 85.
Shawe-Taylor, Capt., 215.
Shortt, Edward, Chief Secretary, 75.
Sinn Fein, 187—188, 233—234.
Smith, Sydney, *Peter Plymley's Letters*, 27—28, 29.
Smith, W. H., 177.
Stanley, "Scorpion," 89, 93.
Stephens, James, 141—146.
Stuart, William, Lord Primate, 61—63.
Sullivan, A. M., *New Ireland*, 143, 152, 153.

Tenant Right in Ulster, 139.
Tone, Wolfe, 9—10, 12—13.
Tottenham, Lord Robert, 62.
Tithes, Reform of, 88, 99.
Tithe War, 134.
Trevelyan, Sir Charles, 128.
Trevelyan, Sir George Otto, 4, 175.
Tynan, Katharine, *Tears of Shadow*, 211.

"Ulster Imperialist," 64—65, 66.
Union, Act of, 1—3, 21, 22—24, 56, 57.
United Irishmen, 9—12.
United Irish League, 214.

Victoria, Irish petition to Queen, 142—143.

Wakefield, E., 34, 35.
Wellington, Duke of, 73.
Whately, Dr., Archbishop of Dublin, 53—54.
Wilberforce, William, 14.
Wyndham, George, 70—71, 205, 214—216, 221.
Wyndham Act (1903), 215—216, 221.

BEINECKE RARE BOOK AND MANUSCRIPT LIBRARY